Chronicles

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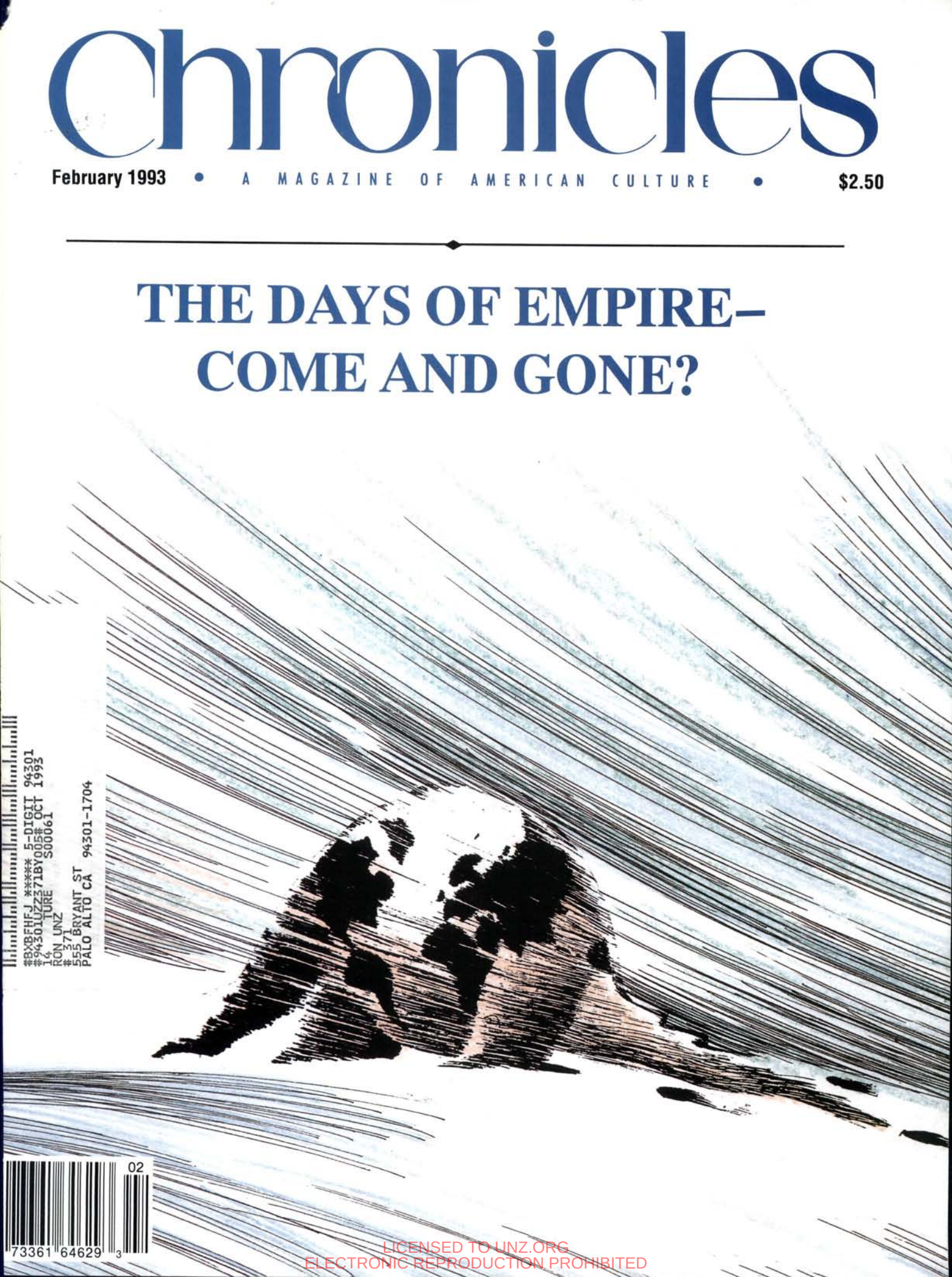
THE DAYS OF EMPIRE– COME AND GONE?



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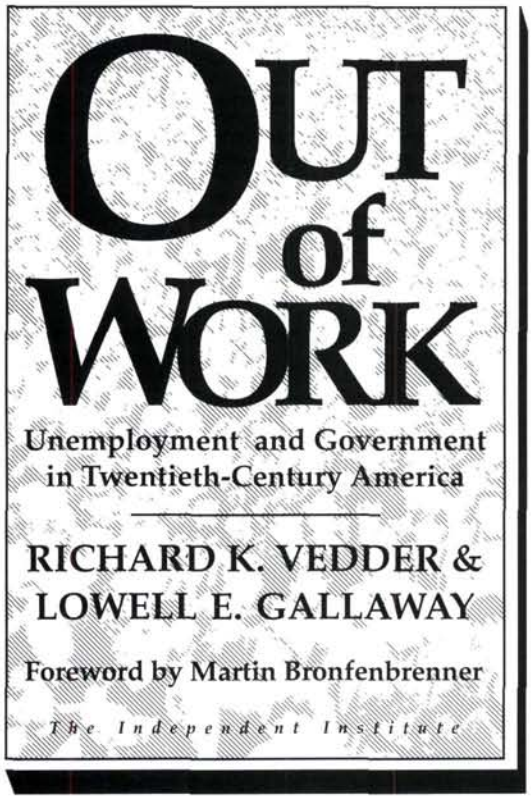
"The most comprehensive book ever on unemployment in the United States." — GEORGE GILDER


OUT of WORK
Unemployment and Government in Twentieth-Century America
RICHARD K. VEDDER & LOWELL E. GALLAWAY
Foreword by Martin Bronfenbrenner
The Independent Institute

The specter of unemployment is increasingly used to justify ever bigger government programs — from continuing high military expenditures to a return to New Deal-type make-work agencies. Now, ***Out of Work*** amasses relentless and devastating evidence that the major cause of high unemployment, both cyclical and secular, is government itself.

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— **LAWRENCE A. KUDLOW**
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*"***Out of Work** *is essential for economists, historians, other social scientists, and especially policy-makers who are interested in and concerned about U.S. unemployment."*
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Editor, *Journal of Labor Research*

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Joint Economic Committee of Congress

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*"***Out of Work** *is a very important book about one of the most important economic problems of our times. It should be widely read and have a strong influence on public policy."*
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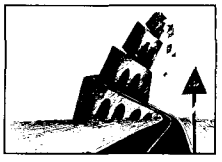
Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

"The day of small nations has long passed away. The day of Empires has come."
—Joseph Chamberlain

PERSPECTIVE



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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 17, No. 2 February 1993

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'Inaugural Addresses'

Gary North in his "Pat Buchanan's First Inaugural Address" (November 1992) cites a line employed by Franklin Roosevelt in his first inaugural address: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This line was actually written by Montaigne, who died in 1592. Bacon, Wellington, and Thoreau also noted this poignant line in their writings.

Mr. North also cited a line used by Jack Kennedy in his first inaugural: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask instead what you can do for your country." This line was first used by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., in an address to the John Sedwick Post #4, Grand Army of the Republic, on May 30, 1884.

These plagiarisms by Frank and Jack's writers are quoted daily throughout the United States as examples of these politicians' eloquence. But the contempt of these pols toward the peasants making up their constituencies is more in evidence than their eloquence. Considering the boiler plate of most political speeches, we might be better off if the pols stole a little more than money.

—Harvey Shahan
Prescott, AZ

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

THE CARTER, ER, CLINTON honeymoon is over, so far as I'm concerned. Even before his inauguration, Bill Clinton had exhausted our patience with his reckless comments on throwing the doors open to AIDS-carrying Haitians and admitting sodomites into the military. The sociopaths of the American press were in ecstasy, now that they had the chance to talk about buggery, day in and day out.

Before and after the election, I met a number of otherwise ordinary people who voted for Clinton. By ordinary, I mean straight white males (and their womenfolk) with no obvious deformities to qualify them for government subsidy. Some were speculators in real estate or the market and justified their vote on practical grounds: it will be easier for them to make money with double-digit inflation. Others said vague things like "It's time for a change," or Bush reneged on his pledge not to raise taxes. The same people would have huzzahed when Rehoboam told the Jews: "My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." If a man had the resources of Terry Southern's Magic Christian, he could do worse than to devote the next four years to rubbing the noses of Clinton's SWM supporters in the dirt their President will be wallowing in. It will almost be worth the misery just to listen to them grumble about high taxes, inflation, homosexual schoolteachers, the Third World invasion, and an orgy of quotas and preferential hiring that will not quite satisfy Jesse Jackson.

In the GOP version of recent history, the election of Bill Clinton is a tragic *peripeteia*. After all, their Presidents won the Cold War, put America back to war, crushed the Bully of Baghdad, and what is their reward? To be turned out of office as soon as the people thought it was safe to elect a Democrat. It's Clemenceau and Churchill all over again.

An old order is giving way, but it is not exclusively or even primarily Republican. Bush was the last President to have served in World War II and probably the last President who can even remember it, while Bill Clinton is the first President to be known publicly as an adulterer and a shirker, the proverbial liberal who would not take his country's side in war. Clinton is an Alcibiades without genius, a Catiline without guts.

Our decline in national character is not exactly unprecedented. If the early years of a republic are marked by virtuous citizen-soldiers—Aristides the Just,

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Cincinnatus, and George Washington—in their decline nations are ruled by hypocrites like Pericles, Sulla, and Franklin Roosevelt. But in the last phase, when empire is an acknowledged fact, the divine ruler is revered for his unbridled potency. Alexander, so the story went, burnt Persepolis to please his whore; Julius Caesar was "every woman's husband and every man's wife." But this much can be said of Julius: he insisted that his wife be above suspicion. Would "Champ" Clinton even care?

If the character of a nation is defined by the character of its rulers, then the new royal family is a frightening mirror of what we have turned into, all of us. Even the older generation, schooled in the more gentile hypocrisy, accepts the new status quo. The outgoing President, no Cato the Younger, rested his case on passage of the Disabilities Act and support for AIDS research. To many Americans the President was just Bill Clinton with arthritis. He couldn't run as fast, but he was going in the same direction. If only he had said, at that fateful moment in the first debate, "Yes, Governor Clinton, I *am* questioning your patriotism," if George Bush had made just that token gesture of hypocrisy toward the figment of republican virtue, he would have earned my vote and deserved the support of honorable men and women. But if he could have even read such an answer off the cue cards, he would not have been George Bush.

—*Thomas Fleming*

H.L. MENCKEN, in 1923, noted the "amalgamation of the two great parties. Both have lost their old vitality, all their old reality; neither, as it stands today, is anything more than a huge and clumsy machine for cadging jobs. They do not carry living principles into their successive campaigns; they simply grab up anything that seems likely to make votes. The old distinctions between them have all faded out, and are now almost indiscernible." To Mencken's delight, Robert La Follette carried the banner of the Old Republic into the 1924 campaign, but though Fighting Bob won 17 percent of the national vote his Progressive Party captured only the 13 electors of Wisconsin. La Follette died the next year, and despite quadrennial entreaties his heirs (Senators Burton K. Wheeler of Montana and William E. Borah of Idaho) eschewed the third-party route.

Does anyone not on a public payroll or a network-news staff disagree with Mencken's indictment today? What Jerry Brown keenly calls the "Incumbent Party" has purged national politics of its sap and vim. Doughty insurgents who "work within the system," as we are instructed to do from childhood, are smeared by Establishment toadies, usually hack journalists and Distinguished Senior Fellows with an eye for the main chance. Just ask Jerry Brown and Pat Buchanan, the best—and therefore most mud-bespattered—of the primary lot. Even muckier obloquy greets he who, like Ross Perot, goes it alone.

Mr. Perot is a dangerous man. He seemed harmless at first, palavering with Larry King and showing off his Norman Rockwell collection. But folksy Ross turned out to be a Texarkana patriot who acts on Wendell Berry's dictum, "Denounce the government and embrace the flag. Hope to live in that free republic for which it stands." No naïf, he knows something of the national-security state and doesn't much like its sordid doings: the Nixon-Kissinger abandonment of American POWs, the Reagan-Bush skullduggery in the Middle East. Raising these matters during the campaign, Perot tripped the alarm and—woof! woof!—got sicced by the servile hounds of the corporate press, who tugged at and soiled his trouser legs all the way to November 3rd. "Paranoiac! Conspiracy fantasist! Nutcake!" they yipped, until half of America believed it.

No wonder so little public discussion takes place in these United States, outside the free-speech zones of talk radio and the coffee shop. The corporations that monopolize the information industry (one percent of owners sell nearly half of all daily newspapers) stifle wholesome parochial impulses within their subject populations. Dull and shrewd alike understand Gore Vidal's epigram that "the price of freedom is eternal discretion." Fittingly, the only outlet that gave Perot a fair shake is owned by an old-fashioned buccaneer capitalist (CNN's Ted Turner) whom the opinion-molders despise.

Perot weathered the blizzard of slander about as well as can be expected. His witty, bantam presence was the only reason to watch the televised "debates" through which he salvaged his good name. His peppery disrespect of pert, insecure lady newsreaders was marvelous to behold. His proposal for an electronic town-hall—a direct descendant of the war-referendum amendment once championed by La Follette, William Jennings Bryan, and most famously Indiana Democrat Louis Ludlow—terrified editorialists, who much preferred the insipid gruel of Perot's soberly responsible and tax-happy United We Stand movement.

So where do we go from here? The outline of a Perotist third-party platform is visible: it features an array of citizen-politician measures, including term limits and restrictions on lobbying; deep spending-cuts and entitlement reforms; the withdrawal of most if not all U.S. troops and subsidies from Europe and Asia; and a Main Street can-do civic responsibility ethic that is the healthiest face of Babbittry. This is a queer admixture of populism and goo-gooism (not unlike La Follette Progressivism) that misses the boat on the biggest "issue" of all: how to return education, charity, government, and everything else to a human scale. Nevertheless, there is enough common-sense radicalism here to excite genuine enthusiasm in the 57 percent of Americans whom pollster Gordon Black tells us would welcome a strong third party.

Will such a movement be capacious enough to include Jerry Brown and Pat Buchanan? Despite their liabilities (Brown's fickleness, Buchanan's friendship with the computerized-mail racketeers), each represents a worthy strain of American populism. I wonder: do these decent men realize how much they have in common?

Patriots of left and right used to have the guts to stand together: Robert Taft campaigned for Robert La Follette, Jr.; Mencken championed political prisoner Eugene V. Debs; William Appleman Williams rehabilitated Herbert Hoover. Why don't their heirs at least sit down for a chat?

Pat and Jerry and every other stout-hearted foe of the Incumbent Party should be cheered that 19 million Americans left the polls humming the old Populist tune, "I was a party man one time, the party would not mind me / So now I'm working for myself, the party's left behind me."

The forces unleashed by the Perot rebellion may dispel, especially if Ross is defanged by wily Willie's blandishments. Perhaps United We Stand will

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be taken over by the salaried vampires who always try to take things over. But maybe, just maybe, the murmurs we heard throughout Middle America on Election Day were the rumbling auguries of an empire-toppling earthquake.

—*Bill Kauffman*

ETHNIC GROUPS were reportedly highly successful in registering new voters in the months before the 1992 national election. In California, the Secretary of State's office was deluged with requests for registration forms and, in at least two cases, countless thousands of those forms were sent to businesses like Domino's Pizza and the 99 Cent Store, which in turn used the greatest privilege of American citizens (the right to vote) as a promotional gimmick for their products. In the case of the 99 Cent Store, full-page ads in the *Los Angeles Times* extolled readers to get 99 cents-worth of free merchandise in exchange for their signatures on voter registration forms at any of its 42 Southern California stores, even after similar tactics on the part of Domino's Pizza had been declared illegal. Although I'm proud to report that I helped to stop this abuse of the voting process, there is no accurate way of knowing how many *noncitizens and illegal aliens* were registered and ultimately used absentee ballots to vote. What we do know is that powerful ethnic organizations like MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) and LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) were responsible for amassing hundreds of thousands of signatures throughout the country in largely Hispanic areas like Los Angeles and its surrounding cities.

If the circulation of counterfeit currency in appreciable amounts will ultimately destroy the economy of a country, then certainly the existence of counterfeit votes will ultimately destroy the right of *American citizens* to legal representation in their country's government at all levels. Therefore, voter fraud is something that American citizens can no longer afford to ignore. Unlike the severe penalties for counterfeiting, however, to my knowledge there has never been a prosecution of a case of perjury in connection with voter fraud.

This is frightening in view of the fact that absentee ballots and laxity on the part of voting officials in verifying eligibility have made possible the registration of household pets. Yes, registering a cat to vote is as easy as registering the President of the United States. In Orange County, California, a man registered his pet cat to protest voter fraud and to warn his fellow citizens of the unscrupulous tactics that are being used by certain segments of our population to gain political power. This incident was reported on ABC by Peter Jennings *just once* before the election, more as an amusing anecdote than as the real and terrifying warning it should have been to American citizens—a warning that unless we have a complete overhaul of voter registration, which makes it more difficult (not easier) for noncitizens and illegal aliens to vote and which in particular restricts "absentee voting" to those who can *prove* a hardship in reaching polling places, we are doomed to the same corruption found in the Banana Republics and to the devastating loss of the right to elect the candidate of our choice.

Efforts on the part of the aforementioned ethnic organizations to strip American citizens of the *exclusive right* to vote have already been successful in cities like Takoma Park, Maryland, where a referendum coerced through threats of rioting was passed that allows noncitizens and illegal aliens not only to vote but to hold office! In other parts of the country, like Long Beach, California, Cambodian refugees who have become American citizens and sworn loyalty to our country's flag and government are permitted to retain the right to vote in Cambodia's elections. Many even go so far as to fly to Cambodia to cast their ballots. No doubt that inconvenience will be spared these Cambodian-"Americans" when they set up "registration locations" in American cities. For now they can vote by proxy.

Even more of a mockery of America's naturalization and voting laws is another Cambodian refugee whose reasons for applying for American citizenship are doubtful at best: General (yes, General) Sak Sutsakhan, whose legal residence for voting purposes in America is Anaheim, California, but who currently heads up the fledgling Liberal Democratic Party in Cambodia and who reportedly tours the United States in an effort to bolster support in America's Cambodian communities for his cause. Whatever *his* cause might be, we can be certain that America's future or the welfare of American citizens are not included.

If this article seems to be a case of closing the barn door after the horse has escaped, it is exactly the opposite, inasmuch as it means preventing "the rest of the horses" from getting out by alerting the public to the need for more secure locks on our voting laws. If the American public heeds this warning, then all future elections will be determined by the votes of *American citizens*, and dual citizenship will be abolished. If a woman can't be "a little bit pregnant," then surely one can't be "a little bit American."

—*Ruth Coffey*

GEORGE BUSH'S offer of $10 billion in loan guarantees to help Israel resettle Soviet and Ethiopian refugees may or may not have been a brilliant move for American diplomacy and domestic politics. It rewarded Prime Minister Rabin for partially halting settlement construction in the occupied territories and for showing greater flexibility in negotiations. Will it also feed a negative Arab reaction? While designed to ease Bush's problem with Israel's American supporters, did the promise, in fact, help the former President in the election?

Leaving political considerations aside for the moment, what are the implications of the guarantees for chronically deficit American budgets? The press initially gave us only sketchy or contradictory information because there was no official clarity on how the guarantees would be structured. When the measure passed the House, it was treated with equal obscurity—buried in longer articles and lacking details. For guidance I called the State Department and my congressman. He had voted for it, but his staff knew few of the bill's provisions. Here's how I understand what happened.

First, the Congress did not approve $10 billion in guarantees in one lump transfer, but rather $2 billion a year over five years. Are guarantees cost-free as the press suggested? No. Apart from the obligation the United States would incur if Israel defaults, there is a legal requirement that all United States international loan guarantees be "scored" with a certain percentage that is set aside and deposited in a common pool to cover default by any future govern-

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ment (not just Israel) receiving a guarantee.

The percentage that is scored is normally set by an interagency committee chaired by the Office of Management and Budget and could be as low as 2 or as high as 12 percent of the total loan amount. Penny-pinching OMB Director Richard Darman sought a "score" of 8 to 9 percent. His more politically sensitive superiors in the White House settled for 4.5 percent or $90 million from the United States budget each year that $2 billion is disbursed. Israel, of course, is also sensitive (to American anti-foreign aid sentiment) and offered to pay the $90 million from its funds each year. Those dollars actually come in fungible fashion from the over $3 billion in American assistance that is annually appropriated for Israel.

A United States government guarantee means Israel can borrow from private lenders at the lowest possible interest rate, i.e., the rate the United States itself would be charged. That is a crucial point because if Israel had to borrow on its own account, the interest rate would be considerably higher. Israel's credit standing in the view of most financial institutions is middle grade (B or C) at best—even lower if political risk is factored into the evaluation.

With such an unattractive credit rating, is there a danger of default? And what will happen if Israel is later unable to repay the loans we guarantee? There are two possibilities. Ideally, the creditors (bond holders or banks) may agree to reschedule payments, canceling or stretching out the original loan terms. That is what has happened in some Latin American and Eastern European countries with private debt not guaranteed by the United States. In the Israeli case, however, the creditors will more likely send the bill to the guarantor, meaning the United States will be obliged to pay.

That may happen even without technical default. Under present law Israel does not face creditors alone. The Cranston Resolution stipulates that American economic aid for Israel in any year will be no less than the amount of loan principal and interest that it must repay to the United States that year. In effect, the United States is currently *repaying* Israel's past indebtedness with new aid dollars. While it is not certain that the new guaranteed loans will also be under this requirement, it is possible that the United States will follow past practice and oblige itself to increase aid to Israel in order to cover their "repayment."

Some have argued that the American economy will benefit from purchases here that Israel makes with the guaranteed loan money. That certainly should be the case; it is a basic principle of foreign aid that money sent abroad should be spent here if at all feasible. Aid to Israel is not, however, administered in the same way as assistance to other countries.

Therein may lie the answer. Treating Israel like every other AID (Agency for International Development)-recipient nation might be the easiest way to assure that the guaranteed loan money is, in fact, spent as we desire, in the United States when possible and never in the occupied territories. Rather than, as now, writing an annual check and handing it over to the Israeli government with little or no accountability, we could establish a formal AID Mission in Israel and deliver and monitor funds as project aid. That procedure is well established in all other AID-recipient countries, but there is currently no AID Mission in Israel.

If there were, a hundred or so AID officers and several times that many private American contractors would help write project proposals and inspect plans before disbursing funds. Housing projects, vocational education schemes, and infrastructure work would all be carefully controlled. Nonproject money for balance-of-payments relief would be subject to Jerusalem's agreeing to specific economic reform measures, such as ending uneconomic subsidies and selling government-owned enterprises. In other words, we would Egyptianize the Israeli AID program. (Rather than cope with AID's regulations and bureaucracy, Israel might well decide it preferred to abandon the idea of building any more settlements.)

Aid to Israel, like aid to Egypt and other traditional major recipients, is costly in its budgetary impact on the United States. Our self-imposed obligation to keep filling the coffers of these "entitlement" countries means we have less with which to assist new democracies or strife-torn nations in Eastern Europe or Africa—or needy communities here. It also means the regular recipients have a reduced incentive to reform their statist, heavily subsidized economies.

The fundamental point is that aid, in whatever amount or form, is only a short-term answer to Israel's severe problems of maintaining economic viability and absorbing refugees from abroad. The sensible answer for Israel's present plight is to forge a new course: reduce political risk (and defense outlays) and generate massive private investment by trying harder to fit into the neighborhood. In time, regional integration can bring trade and cooperation. It's the route the rest of the world is taking—even South Africa, Iran, and the former Soviet Union.

The essential precondition, of course, is peace. Making peace, even on less than ideal terms, must be at the top of the Israeli agenda. The decisions that Congress and the new Clinton administration make should also be designed to push peace as a priority—ahead of domestic politics. American economic interests demand no less.

—*Henry Precht*

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by Samuel Francis

The Survival Issue

Long ago in March 1989, in the first column I wrote for this space, I noted that President George Bush shared with only one other American chief executive (namely, Martin Van Buren) the distinction of having been elected to the White House from the office of the Vice-President. I also commented that "the lackluster record of Andrew Jackson's successor perhaps does not inspire confidence about the new administration," a remark that, generously interpreted, might be considered a prediction of Mr. Bush's defeat four years later. But even with all the generosity that *Chronicles* readers are capable of mustering, it was at best merely a tongue-in-cheek prophecy. Just think what I could prognosticate if I ever got serious.

One serious prediction that wafts up from the tea leaves of the 1992 election is that American conservatism, at least in the form in which it has been known since it first began to materialize in the late 1940's and early 1950's, is now defunct, and you don't need to be a swami to understand why it died. The Bush administration and Mr. Bush's defeat delivered the *coup de grace* to the organized American right, even though the terminal signs had been evident for some time. In the days after the election, of course, a squadron of professional conservatives delivered themselves of all the reasons why the Republican loss of the White House was really a tremendous victory, but no one paid much attention to them. Like Glendower, they could call spirits from the vasty deep, but no apparitions materialized in response to their incantations.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that mainstream conservatism is defunct is that the very concept of what conservatism means has evaporated, even for those who regard themselves as its high priests. The day after the election, *Washington Post* reporter E. J. Dionne quoted a high-ranking official of the Heritage Foundation on the continuing relevance of conservative ideas. "What do you mean that conservative ideas didn't work in the 1992 election?" she protested. "They worked for Clinton." Only a few days later, as Spike Lee's new film *Malcolm* X was about to debut, an editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal* published a column entitled "Malcolm X, Conservative Hero." It ought to be evident that a movement that claims both Bill Clinton and Malcolm X as its icons is simply meaningless, and you don't have to be a political neanderthal to wonder what either one of these champions has to do with anything remotely resembling "conservatism" in any sense.

Of course, the authors of such sentiments were simply trying to paint the pallid countenance of the conservative cadaver with the only cosmetics they possessed. Totally ignorant of what the cadaver looked like when alive, they merely swiped some make-up from the dressing table of the left and applied it in a vain and vulgar attempt to resurrect a zombie for the right. Indeed, for the last several years the application of cosmetics is what the mainstream right has been reduced to. Ever since Mr. Bush in 1990 violated his pledge not to raise taxes, professional conservatives have kicked and screamed vociferously, but in 1992 they wound up supporting him anyway in a desperate effort to pretend, to themselves as well as to their dwindling number of followers and donors, that they still retained political clout at the highest level of national politics. As the electoral judgment day drew nigh, their efforts reached an almost comic, but definitely pathetic, pinnacle.

The week before the election, a group of about 45 professional conservatives summoned a meeting in Washington that was originally planned as a "wake" for the Bush administration, which was facing a rout because, you see, it had deserted conservative principles. But in the last part of the same week, as the assemblage was about to convene, Mr. Bush began to rally a bit in the polls, and it started to look as though he might win after all. The 45 stalwarts at once changed their tune, and when they emerged from their huddle, they proclaimed their unanimous endorsement of Mr. Bush. Indeed, his recent rise in the polls was due, they announced, to his return to "conservative roots," though when his conservative roots bore no branches in the actual voting a few days later, the pundits and gurus of defuncto-conservatism labored late into the night to explain how Mr. Bush's ideological defection was responsible for the disaster. Had the defuncto-cons harbored sufficient integrity to separate themselves definitely from Mr. Bush when he first began to go wrong, they could today more convincingly purport that his defeat was indeed due to his abandonment of their "principles," whatever those might be. But, having swaddled themselves in him, his administration, and the increasingly distasteful Republican Party under his tutelage, the organized right is unable to extricate itself from the wreckage of last November.

No small part of the more general reason for the demise of American conservatism has been the importation into the ranks of its leadership in the last decade of the very species of ignoramuses, opportunists, and sloganeers who imagine that Malcolm and Mr. Clinton are men of the right and who snatch at every fluff in the political breeze to prove that they and their "movement" are within grasp of ultimate victory. But the even more general reason is that history has passed conservatism by, and that fact implies a reorientation of American politics such as has not been seen since the New Deal or before.

The American Right centered around three principles, which may be formulated in an over-simplified way as anticommunism, small government, and cultural traditionalism. Of the three, none remains intact, at least as the first generation of conservative architects constructed them. Anticommunism is simply irrelevant today, and even when the Soviet Union still had breath in its body, the anticommunist cause was subtly redefined in terms of a crusade for global democracy and a new global regime thinly disguised by the trappings of nationalism as a *Pax Americana*. "Small government"—a strict constructionist, laissez-faire, and decentralized state—was also redefined, sometimes subtly,

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sometimes brazenly, as the post-Reagan right embraced the civil rights movement, supply-side economics, the "imperial presidency," a "progressive conservative" defense of the welfare state, certain forms of judicial activism that suited the Reaganites' immediate partisan and ideological agendas, and other extensions of the American megastate constructed by the left in this century. "Cultural traditionalism," of course, remains a catchword of the right today, though conservative airheads have increasingly denuded it of any concrete content. In their version of cultural traditionalism, "family values" mean whatever you say they mean, Americans have "religion" but no particular faith or church, and, if not yet Malcolm X, then at least Martin Luther King, Jr., is taken as an exemplar of American ideals on the same level as Washington and Jefferson. Any notion that America is the product of a distinctive and particular people and their institutions and that the nation cannot exist or survive apart from them is alien and repugnant to the mainstream leadership of those who regard themselves as conservatives today, and even the description of America as a "Christian nation," as Mississippi's Governor Kirk Fordice discovered shortly after the election, is greeted with derision and fear by the national leaders of the Republican Party.

What remains of American conservatism today seems largely to be centered around economic and fiscal issues—controlling or limiting taxation, cutting the budget, and dealing with the deficit (for those who think that the deficit is even an issue). What no one seems to have noticed, however, is that, absent the "small government" ideals of the Old Right, those issues too become meaningless. If conservatives are now committed to a kind of Tory welfarism and if, even after the end of the Cold War, they continue to support the foreign policy and military apparatus of the Cold War state in the form of foreign aid, troops abroad, etc., how can they possibly expect to cut the taxes or limit the spending necessary to maintain these structures and functions? It is all very well to smirk about the costs of the franking privilege and various barrels of pork, but these perennial and egregious examples of "waste" are not significant portions of the federal budget.

Moreover, it has become a commonplace of American politics that so many Americans of all kinds and constituencies now depend on "welfare" and similar benefits dispensed by the federal leviathan that it is politically impossible for any one party or movement to get itself elected and preside over a balanced and fair reduction of federal entitlements. The budget crisis in the United States will be solved when and only when a coalition of constituencies gains power and proceeds to slice out the entitlements of everyone who is not part of the coalition. But no one imagines that entitlements will ever be reduced in accordance with the small-government, political-neutralist principles that animated the Old Right from the days of the New Deal.

The word and concept of "conservatism," then, have been rendered all but meaningless, though it is to be expected that those who make use of the word and concept will prosper under the Clinton administration, and while it might even come to pass that some of them will eventually be elected to one office or another, it is doubtful that any of them will ever be able to govern, unless they further delude themselves that the left is really the right and thereby gain the applause and approval of the nation's dominant political and cultural forces. "Conservatism," to be sure, is able to raise money, increase subscriptions for its journals, attract some followers, and perhaps even win elections, but it is unable to govern because it does not control or even have strong allies within the dominant culture. It is uninterested in culture, except insofar as "culture" serves as a convenient bumper-sticker for electoral purposes, and in the last election conservatives proved that they cannot even make effective use of their vaguely and vapidly defined cultural issues.

What, then, is to be done? Gaetano Mosca, the Italian political scientist of the late 19th century, wrote that the "Social Darwinist" conception of human society was somewhat misplaced, because the competition among and within human societies is usually not a "struggle for existence" or survival, as Social Darwinism taught, but rather a "struggle for preeminence, which is really a constant phenomenon that arises in all human societies, from the most highly civilized down to such as have barely issued from savagery." The real issue in most social conflicts, from war to elections, is not about physical sur-

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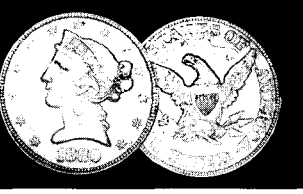

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vival but about which groups will prevail and subdue other groups. For most of American history since the Civil War, American political conflicts have not been about survival but about preeminence, about which group—parties, ideologies, factions, regions, coalitions—become preeminent. That has also been true of the conservative-liberal conflict since World War II, because the conflict was largely over which direction the American megastate would lurch and who would control it, not whether there would be a megastate, much less whether there would be an America.

Yet there comes a time in the history of many societies when survival is the issue, although even then the "survival issue" is closely connected with the "preeminence issue." In the election just past, some candidates—Ross Perot and James Stockdale, for example, and, at least by implication, Pat Buchanan—began to whisper, ever so softly, that for America that time has now come. The issues that began to mutter in this past election—economic digestion by foreign powers, the danger not only of crime but of outright anarchy, cultural disintegration under the impact of massive immigration and militantly antiwhite and anti-Western multiculturalist movements—have to do with whether the American nation, as a political unity and as a cultural identity, will live or die.

Conservatism, as it came to be defined in the Reagan-Bush era, has nothing to say about such issues because it refuses to admit their relevance, and it refuses to admit their relevance because most of its exponents are preoccupied with proving that they are compatible with the same political and cultural forces that have brought the nation and its civilization to the brink of destruction, with proving that Malcolm X and Mr. Clinton are really conservatives and that immigration and unrestricted free trade are really tonics for the nation. Indeed, the defuncto-cons typically regard some of the most dangerous of such forces as signs of health. If, however, the survival issues now arising are not addressed by political forces capable of resolving them, the nation, its culture, and its people are likely to go over the brink and not come back. It won't be conservatism that resolves them.

The passing of conservatism, then, cannot be mourned. Like any species that slips into the evolutionary twilight, it was unable to respond to the challenge it encountered, and good riddance to it. The task for Americans who are intent on the survival of their nation and its civilization now is not to revive anything like the species that has just expired but to evolve a new movement, a new political and ideological category that transcends left and right, capable of perceiving the current challenges and formulating the measures necessary to meet them. With a slate clean of the defuncto-cons, we now may be able to create such a movement. c

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Coming Wrath—January 1992—Samuel Francis on James Burnham and the managerial revolution, Andrei Navrozov on democracy and dictatorship, Tomislav Sunic on the future of nationalism, and Harold O.J. Brown on the prophecies of Pitirim Sorokin. Plus Chilton Williamson, Jr. on Deep Ecology, William Grigg on the case against the Boy Scouts, and Anne Marie Morgan on the bureaucracy of getting married.

Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Welfare—February 1992—Allan Carlson on how federal housing policies have contributed to the breakup of the family, William Murchison on the doctor and the state, and Christina F. Jeffrey on Social Security as family policy. Plus Barbara McCarthy on welfare and illegal immigration, and Jeffrey Tucker on Housing and Urban Development.

Faces of Eve: Goddess, Starlet, Poetess—March 1992—Janet Scott Barlow on the devolution of women on the screen, Thomas Fleming on marriage as the real right to privacy, and R.S. Gwynn on American women poets. Plus Betsy Clarke on the politics of rape, Anne Marie Morgan on the new technology of fertility control, and Kenneth Craycraft on Mary Ann Glendon's *Rights Talk*.

The Spanish Americas—April 1992—Richard Estrada on the Hispanic contributions to American culture, Mario Vargas Llosa on the difficult rise of the Latin American novel, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on bullfighting in Juárez, Mexico, and poems by Jorge Luis Borges. Plus Brad Linaweaver on Albert Jay Nock, William Murchison on LBJ, and Murray Rothbard on violence in New York City.

Law and Order: Crime and Punishment—May 1992—Thomas Fleming on the role of the executioner, Philip Jenkins on the drug war and personal liberties, Graeme Newman on the case for corporal punishment, and Theodore Pappas on vigilante justice. Plus Murray Rothbard on street crime, Llewellyn Rockwell on vagrancy law, Richard Irving on taxi drivers and minority crime, and a firsthand account of life in prison.

Restoring the Republic—June 1992—Clyde Wilson on the republican approach, Samuel Francis on the nationalist approach, and E. Christian Kopff on the Augustan compromise. Plus Thomas Fleming on why we have the government we deserve, Theodore Pappas on Japanese-American trade, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on illegal immigration, and Murray Rothbard on repudiating the national debt.

Citizenship—July 1992—John Lukacs on patriotism, Richard D. Lamm on why great nations need great citizens, Richard Flathman on four models of citizenship, and Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith on why citizenship should be based on consent and not birth. Plus Thomas Fleming on the rebirth of nationalism, and Samuel Francis on the Buchanan Revolution.

Reactionary Modernism—August 1992— Thomas Molnar on Céline and French reactionary modernism, Peter J. Stanlis on Robert Frost, J.O. Tate on Wyndham Lewis, and Larry Woiwode on Dos Passos. Plus David R. Slavitt on the novels of 1991, Justin Raimondo on Ayn Rand as plagiarist, Bill Kauffman on Sinclair Lewis, and Chilton Williamson, Jr.'s review of R. Emmett Tyrrell's *The Conservative Crack-Up*.

Rotten to the Core: American Colleges—September 1992—Thomas Fleming on literature and the curriculum debate, Robert Weissberg on the life of a campus conservative, E. Christian Kopff on a true classical curriculum, and student reports on political correctness at the University of Florida, Grinnell College, and Georgetown University. Plus Laura Rogers' exposé of the Parents as Teachers program.

1492: Italians and America—October 1992—Christie Davies on blaming Columbus, E. Christian Kopff on Margaret Fuller in Rome, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on pseudoscholarship about Columbus, and Samuel Francis on *The Godfather* as political metaphor. Plus Thomas Fleming on the changing frontier, David R. Slavitt on Lorenzo Da Ponte, and Thomas O. Jones on Columbus' descendants.

Ain't Freedom Grand: The 1992 Election—November 1992—Donald Warren on the empty voting booth, William J. Quirk on the unrepresented middle class, Thomas Fleming on the Electoral College, James S. Fishkin on deliberative polling, and Samuel Francis on the passivity of the electorate. Plus Allan Carlson on proportional representation, and Theodore Pappas on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s early plagiarisms.

Ten Commandments—December 1992—A round-table discussion on the Decalogue—by Thomas Molnar, Gary North, Frank W. Brownlow, Allan Carlson, Jacob Neusner, Theodore Pappas, Murray Rothbard, E. Christian Kopff, Harold O.J. Brown, and George Garrett. Plus Philip Jenkins on the panic over priestly pedophilia, Sally Wright on Malcolm Muggeridge, and William Wilson on C.S. Lewis.

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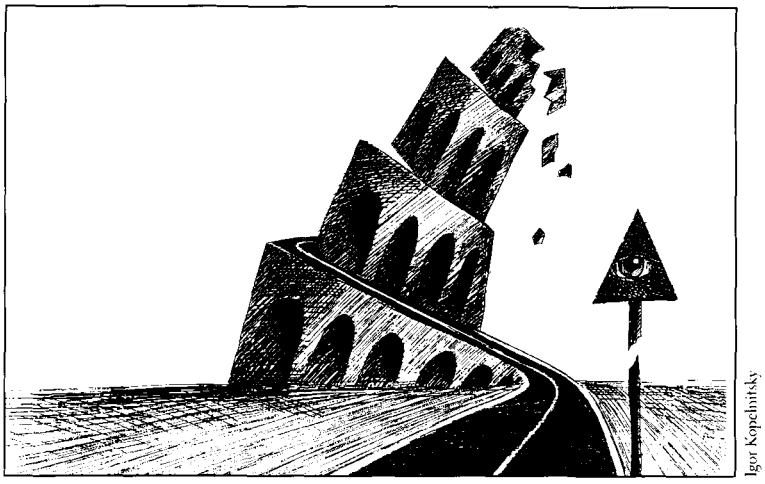

A League of Our Own

by Thomas Fleming

Nineteen ninety-two was an opportunity for Americans to reflect on both their past and their future. In less than a month, we celebrated the birthday of Columbus and the transfer of power from the New Deal to the Big Chill, from the civics-class pieties of George Bush to the *Penthouse* improprieties of Bill Clinton.

I watched a good part of the campaign from an Italian vantage-point. I went to Italy primarily to speak about Columbus and the American tradition and to continue my very limited education in things Italian. At the end of the month, I was more confused than ever about Italian politics, but—as is always the case—I had learned something about my own country.

A year or so ago, a part-Italian friend took me to task for saying that Italy was in crisis. Without admitting I was right then, he now acknowledges the real sense of emergency that exists everywhere in Italy. At the end of the summer, the middle classes were practically up in arms against the government's handling of economic questions. Faced with mounting debt, the government ordered property-owners to pay a second round of real-estate taxes. All over Italy, people lined up to pay the impost and avoid the threatened penalties, only to discover that no one knew how much was owed, and, besides, the government had not printed up the tax forms.

The government wanted the extra money, in part, to pursue its futile plan to stabilize the lira on world markets. After hearing, day after day, that the lira would never be devalued, businessmen woke up one morning to read of the devaluation. Even opponents of the policy were outraged, and one businessman told me that the regime had forfeited any claim to be taken seriously.

The Italian economy is in ruins; none of the major parties inspires confidence even in loyal members; the Mafia is murdering every judge and prosecutor who stand in its way. In the midst of this crisis, the labor unions—pampered and coddled by the government—are once again threatening strikes that will shut down the entire country, just like in the good old days of the 1970's. I got up early one morning in Genoa to catch the train to Milan, and when I asked the desk clerk to call me a cab, she gave me a crude version of Hotspur's response to Owen Glendower's boast that he could summon spirits: "But will they come when you do call for them?" Somewhere in the monologue I picked out the most dreaded word in Italian vocabulary: *sciopero* (strike).

The unions have a right to be unhappy. After squandering vast sums of money on monetary stabilization, the government decided to balance the budget by cutting health benefits. The unions—part of the party-state that governs the country—went along, but when the most powerful union leader in Italy attempted to hold a rally, he was attacked by union members who have joined the Lega Nord, a coalition of localist movements in Northern Italy that preaches a doctrine of economic liberty and political decentralization.

The Lega has increased its share of the vote in every recent election and is now the dominant party in the rich industrial North. In response to the double taxation, Lega's leaders called for a tax protest; their answer to government-controlled unions is to form their own unions; and their solution—only half in jest—to the collapse of the lira is to coin their own money, the Lega.

The ruling coalition is terrified. Opinion polls in Monza and Varese, two wealthy cities in Lombardia, gave the Lega 35 percent or better in the next mayoral elections—high figures in a country with dozens of parties. The government responded to these polls by postponing the elections. Umberto Bossi's threat, reported in the *Corriera della sera* last September, could not have been plainer: "If the government will not reverse its decisions, a march on Rome could start from Milan to ask for the North's secession."

Bossi's hand was strengthened by a recent victory in Mantova, a city outside the center of the Lega's strength. For the first time in years the Socialists openly campaigned together with the former Communist Party leader, Achille Ochetto, in a popular front with the Greens for the sole purpose of defeating the Lega, but when the votes were counted the Lega Nord polled 34 percent, roughly double what the second-place

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Christian Democrats (DC) received.

A high-ranking official of the Lega asked me what I thought of the government's postponement of elections, and when I called it "*un piccolo colpo di stato*," he smiled and expressed his agreement. The elections were rescheduled for December (the day after the election an Italian friend called to say "*La Lega ha stravinto*"—it won hands down). So far, the second march on Rome has not materialized, but it is possible to sense the trembling of the DC leadership even from one thousand miles away. Former head of state Francesco Cossiga, in an interview in London, performed an uncharacteristic act of truckling diplomacy: "I prefer to think of it as an excursion (*passeggiata*)," he commented, explaining that unions and parties always come to Rome for their meetings. The headline should have read: "NEW LIGHT SHED ON MUSSOLINI."

Perhaps more frightening than Bossi's original threat was his denial last October of any plans for a march. Conceding that if he did decide to march "the citizens would support us," he explained that it was only his "profound democratic conviction that prevented him from venturing upon solutions of this type."

I cannot think of a major American political figure since MacArthur who would let a little thing like democratic process stand in the way of his ambitions. If, for the time being, the head of the Lega Nord has rejected "solutions of this type," he began his electoral march on Rome several years ago. At the end of the 1980's, when the *leghisti* were boasting of getting 10 or 15 percent of the vote in local elections in Lombardia, the movement was considered a joke. Reviving the dialect and customs of their Lombard ancestors, the members of the Lega Lombarda struck most educated Italians as participants in a historical pageant representing Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*. Even two years ago, when the Lega's threat was confined to the North, Italians made fun of me for expressing an interest in a movement that was as irritating as it was quaint. They laughed when I tried to explain that whatever they might think of the style of the "Senatur" (Lombard for "senator"), his message of decentralized federalism and economic reform offered the only hope for Italy.

In general, the *leghisti* would like a new constitution along the lines of Swiss federalism. The country would be divided into three republics of the North, Center, and South, which would function like Swiss cantons and maintain considerable autonomy in political, cultural, and economic affairs. Although regional and local autonomy is part of Bossi's original conception, the Swiss flavor of the three republics owes something to Gianfranco Miglio, a senator and political scientist often described as the Lega's ideologue, even though he is technically independent.

Miglio has spent much of his professional life analyzing the deficiencies of the Italian constitution and proposing such remedies as a directly elected president and large autonomous regions. In his most recent book, *Come cambiare*, Miglio once again defends his idea of a federal system of macroregions and of a new *Unione italiana* that would give the peoples of Italy the rights of self-determination guaranteed by the Helsinki agreement.

Under a federal system, the historic regions of Italy—Lombardia, Toscana, Veneto, etc.—would be able to assert their cultural identities without interference from bureaucrats imported from other parts of the country. Traditionally, Italians have accepted the imposition of senior officials from outside as a guarantee of impartiality, a custom that echoes the institution of the *podesta* of the later Middle Ages. What disgusts many Northern Italians is the swarm of Southern bureaucrats, teachers, and policemen who have little or no sympathy with the customs and traditions of Lombardia or Piemonte.

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One key to the Lega's growing popularity is its position on immigration. In reasserting the cultural identity of its regions, a federalized Italy would move to expel illegal aliens and tighten restrictions on immigrants. Despite the popularity of the Lega's stand on immigration, it—more than anything else—was responsible for much of the bad press.

The really explosive issue, though, is not foreign immigration, but domestic. Northern Italian hostility to Sicilians and other Southerners is proverbial. While much of the generalized resentment is unjustified—Sicilians take jobs that Lombards are unwilling to accept—it is also true that the Southerners have brought their way of life with them, which includes revenge killings, the drug trade, and their great criminal organizations, the Mafia, the Camorra, and the *'ndrangheta*.

Italian crime syndicates are no joke. In America we might entertain the fantasy that the Genoveses or Gambinos are just like Vito Corleone, but their cousins in Italy—the real Corleone family, by the way—are lethal parasites upon the political and economic systems. Giorgio Bocca in *La disUNITÀ d'Italia* made plain for even the simplest readers what the situation is in the South: "connected" judges rigging acquittals and token sentences; appeals judges overturning convictions; sequestered gangsters returning to Palermo and Naples to resume their careers. Two honest judges in Palermo were compelled to meet in secret to prevent their colleagues from leaking information to friends in the Mafia. One of them was assassinated in 1983. More recently, the most famous anti-Mafia judge in Italy, Giovanni Falcone, was the victim of a car bomb powerful enough to have taken out a small village.

Everyone has always known that the Mafia was instrumental in delivering the Sicilian vote to the Christian Democrats. Americans can hardly point a finger at the Italians, since it was our own President, Franklin Roosevelt, who restored the Mafia after it had been effectively scotched, if not killed, by the Fascists. Ever since the war, the Mafia has been a political fact of life in much of the South, and if the Christian Democrats were going to succeed against the Communists, they could not afford to be selective about their allies. But who is

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the master and who the servant in this alliance? There have been persistent rumors that Salvo Lima, the DC's power-broker in Sicily and longtime friend of former party secretary Giulio Andreotti, was connected with the Cosa Nostra leader "Toto" Riina. Despite Andreotti's frequent denials, Lima has been named more than once by Mafia *pentiti* (informers) as their ambassador to the DC.

Several years ago, when Umberto Bossi declared that a vote for the DC was a vote for the Mafia, his critics cried "for shame," because he had slandered the greatest statesman in contemporary Italy, the fox who had by his own machinations kept Italy in the Western alliance and prevented a Communist-Socialist takeover. If the allegations are proved, they will do nothing to diminish Andreotti's accomplishments except to reveal him as one more great man who learned to value power for its own sake.

What really offends Northern Italians about the Mafia is the hold it appears to exercise over DC politicians and the ease with which it extorts millions out of government contracts. In the new Mafia, drugs and prostitution are small potatoes. The big-ticket items are highways, office buildings, and welfare fraud. I spent an afternoon touring a great city in the North accompanied by a Sicilian lady of great charm and erudition. Although she has spent her professional life in the North, she remains a Sicilian patriot, and as we drove by a great new building, she explained, "It makes me so proud. A Sicilian company got the contract. To get work done of this quality, they had to go all the way to Sicily."

It is, in fact, a magnificent building, and the contract may well have been on the level, but none of the natives I spoke with would even concede the possibility. (If the lady reads this, I hope she has forgotten her promise to come to America to kill me if I say anything bad about Sicily.) The Sicilians do have their own story to tell, of how they were conquered by Northerners who have been complaining ever since about the problem of the South, but it is time to give up those resentments and to acknowledge that a federal system will ultimately do as much for the South as it does for the North. As it is, by depending heavily on the largesse distributed by Rome, some Southern Italians have become like the Québecois in Canada: impotent and resentful. Autonomy would force them to address their own problems.

When I made this statement to a member of the Lega Liguria in Genoa, he was very skeptical. Federalism will work in the North, he insisted, because Northerners are capable of self-government, but only a strong central government can do anything about the Mafia. But Italy has a centralized government, and it appears to be under the Mafia's thumb.

The polemics of the leghe against Southerners caused few problems so long as they were strictly regional movements, but with the chance for national power in sight, Senator Bossi, it has been predicted, will have to tone down the rhetoric. Paul Piccone, in a special issue of *Telos* devoted to the leghe (Winter '91-'92), notes that "ethnicity was officially abandoned with the launching of the Northern League. . . . The radical decentralization and federalization of the present unitary state . . . should . . . allow the populations of both South and North to put their own houses in order." Piccone's analysis—and predictions—were borne out at the end of October, when Bossi suspended a local secretary in Trent for holding demonstrations telling Southerners to go home.

Although the power center of the Lega Nord continues to be Lombardia, its strength is growing in other regions: the Veneto, Emilia (where the Reds are deserting the Communist parties for the Lega), the Piedmont, and even Liguria. In the North as a whole, one recent poll gives the Lega 22 percent (which would be up from 10.3 in the last communal elections), just behind the DC's 23.4 percent (down from 33.4).

In broadening their base, the leghe may run the risk of losing their regional identities. In Liguria, for example, the emphasis is almost strictly on economic and political reform. I spoke with a Ligurian Leghista, a lawyer, who was faintly amused by the Lombard myths and symbols—the *carroccio*, the oath of Alberto da Guisanno, the songs in dialect—and cast the Lega Nord's program in terms that would appeal to students of Austrian economics: an end to corruption and welfare fraud, the deregulation and privatization of banking, commerce, and industry.

In fact, he described himself as *liberalista* in economics and against the current *industria dello stato*, which means intervention of politicians into all levels of business. It was such intervention that led to the great bribery scandal—the so-called "*tangenti*"—in which leading members of the Socialist Party have been implicated. In September, one of the most-beloved Socialist leaders shot himself, rather than face the music. The response of party chief Bettino Craxi has been to denounce the judges. Bets are being made on how long Craxi can remain the Socialist *capo dei capi*, and the smart money is selling short on Craxi and long on his chief critic, Claudio Martelli, the best friend of Italy's illegal immigrants. Despite his personal charm, Martelli's hip Third-Worldism may make Socialists long for the old-fashioned crook.

Of the Lega Lombarda's original program, decentralization remains an important issue, even in Liguria. The *communi*, I was told by my friend in the Lega Liguria, have lost the power to control taxation because of the "need" to drain resources toward the South. As a result it is impossible to have balanced local budgets, no matter which party is in power.

The North/South problem is really a difference in the "*modo di pensare*" (way of thinking). The Sicilians are not so much lazy as aristocratic and disdainful of manual work. This, combined with their refusal to see government in any but personal terms, has meant the persistence of feudalism, albeit in distorted forms. From one perspective, at least, this description makes the Sicilians seem much more attractive than the hardworking and responsible *borgesia* of the North, whose regional and local identities have been homogenized, my Genovese friend observed, by television.

A few days after leaving Genoa—my kind friend from the Lega had to drive me to the station because of the strike—I had the chance to speak with Dr. Elia Manara, a distinguished physician in Como and one of the Lega's newest senators. Since Dr. Manara, the Lega's point-man on health care, is unusually well-informed on practical matters of economics and technology, he is a far cry from the sentimental regionalism of the early days. I asked him if the leagues were in danger of losing their regional identities. He explained that while maintaining their local attachments, the leagues were also discovering a common unity in a larger Northern ecosystem that Miglio and others call *Padania*. He derided the notion of the universal citizen and went on to reject Italian nationalism as a fascist idea. As a metaphor for the whole movement,

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he described Lombard provincialism as the locomotive of the autonomist train.

Manara regards himself as the very opposite of an ideologue. As a scientist, he is interested in the self-evident principles of human nature as they are revealed in history and experience. Federalism, he insisted, because it is rooted in human nature, is a theory for human survival. We talked of the original American system of federalism as a successful example to set beside Switzerland. I explained that, while our system had been undone by war, the federalist thinking of Jefferson, Madison, and Calhoun had new relevance in both Europe and the Americas.

But if the Italians have much to learn from our past, we can benefit from a study of Italy's present. In Genoa, because of an international convention of philatelists, I had to stay in an old hotel out in Sturla. Neither the hotel nor the neighborhood had much to recommend it, except for the view of the harbor from my balcony. It was from here that Garibaldi launched his invasion of Sicily and helped to inaugurate that process of centralization that every major Italian statesman—from Cavour to Mussolini to Andreotti—has followed. After World War II, various federalist provisions were written into the new constitutions, but few were implemented and those few were circumvented if not hamstrung, corrupted if not ignored. The result is the familiar spectacle of a corrupt conspiracy of a few thousand politicians micromanaging the lives of millions of people, most of whom could get along quite well with a minimum of intervention.

The current economic situation is so acute that many Italians, in and out of the leagues, are beginning to rethink the basic political mythology of the nation—the *Risorgimento*, Garibaldi, and Cavour. We are not quite so desperate, here in the United States, but who knows what thoughts we might entertain after four years of "Compagno Bill" in the White House.

Our own political mythology is built on the doctrine of equality, open borders at home, and the imposition of democracy abroad; the heroes of our myths are Presidents Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt who made war for the sake of peace, suspended laws for the sake of the Constitution, and thought domestic tyranny was the best vehicle for exporting democracy. Some Italians are brave enough to confess the mistakes of the past and intelligent enough to long for the kind of government our own ancestors lived under. What about us?

* * *

POSTSCRIPT: Are Americans ready for something like a League of their own? None of the three candidates in the recent presidential election was willing to face the reality of life in America: the rioting and rampages perpetrated by an underclass that consists, for the most part, of unassimilated minorities. Pillaging, arson, and murder have taken place in Los Angeles and Miami, but since these criminals were fighting under the black flag of racial sensitivity, the leadership of this country refused to defend the innocent. In New York, a murderer was turned loose by a jury, because the killer was black and the victim Jewish. Shortly afterwards, Spike Lee turned out a hagiography of a pimp and a con-artist who evolved into a leading anti-white racist, and the only controversy over the film had to do with teenagers who sport the "X" symbol without reflecting deeply on its meaning. They do not need to reflect on Spike or Malcolm; they have already imbibed the symbol's meaning from Ice-T and Sister Souljah.

With widespread public approval, the outgoing President, eager to relive the thrill of the Gulf War, decided to send troops to Somalia. To judge from the columns, news programs, and call-in shows, Americans think this is a good idea, because they could not bear to see all those pictures of starving Somalians on network television. Rather than turn off the set and find a book to read, we go to war. What, in the meantime, is news, big news? News is when the addlepated female who owns controlling interest in the Cincinnati Reds is accused of telling race jokes in the office. This calls for investigations, denunciations in Congress, and demonstrations organized by such major-league racists as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson.

Apart from our collective soft head on matters of ethnic sensitivity, what is the connection between Marge Schott and the invasion of Somalia? We no longer know how to mind our own business, take care of our own neighborhoods, defend our own interests. We get our kicks from TV riots and African civil wars, and when the station signs off, we sleep a sleep untroubled by dreams of what we and our representative government are doing, in failing to protect us at home while sending armies abroad to lay down the peace. We created the problem in Somalia by inflicting the humanitarian aid that resulted in a population that cannot be sustained. At the same time, we are pursuing an immigration policy that even David Broder now realizes will turn the United States into Somalia. If human life is so precious, why don't we protect it in Detroit, in Miami, or in Cabrini Green?

If something like a League movement were to develop here in the States, urban majors would not be calling upon the National Guard to restore order; it would be up to the cities and even the neighborhoods to defend themselves. We would have a national government, but it would be restricted to defending the national interest, not to giving away American lives to a debating society for the criminally insane—the United Nations.

There are only two alternatives for this continental empire that has never been a real nation: either we find the means to decentralize decision-making and restore authority to the old institutions of family and town and county (and even state), or else we lapse into a multifaceted civil war of blacks against Hispanics against whites against blacks against Jews. . . . It is too late for a man on horseback leading a militia of populist rednecks. There aren't enough rednecks to go around—besides, Bubba is too busy watching X-rated movies on his Japanese-made VCR. Bubba and his Midwestern counterparts might have just enough manhood left in them to stand up for themselves and their families, if they have no alternative, but they—or rather we—will have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, before we will take responsibility for ourselves.

The revolution cannot be made overnight, and the first step would be the creation of a movement devoted to the long-range goals of political devolution, privatization (ours is not a free enterprise system), protection of the national interest in matters of immigration, trade, and foreign policy, and the reassertion of our old cultural identities as a European and—dare we echo the Governor of Mississippi? —a Christian nation. If there is no movement or party willing to embrace a Leghist program, then one needs to be formed, and if that is impossible, my advice is to stockpile ammunition and invest in bullet-proof doors and shutters.

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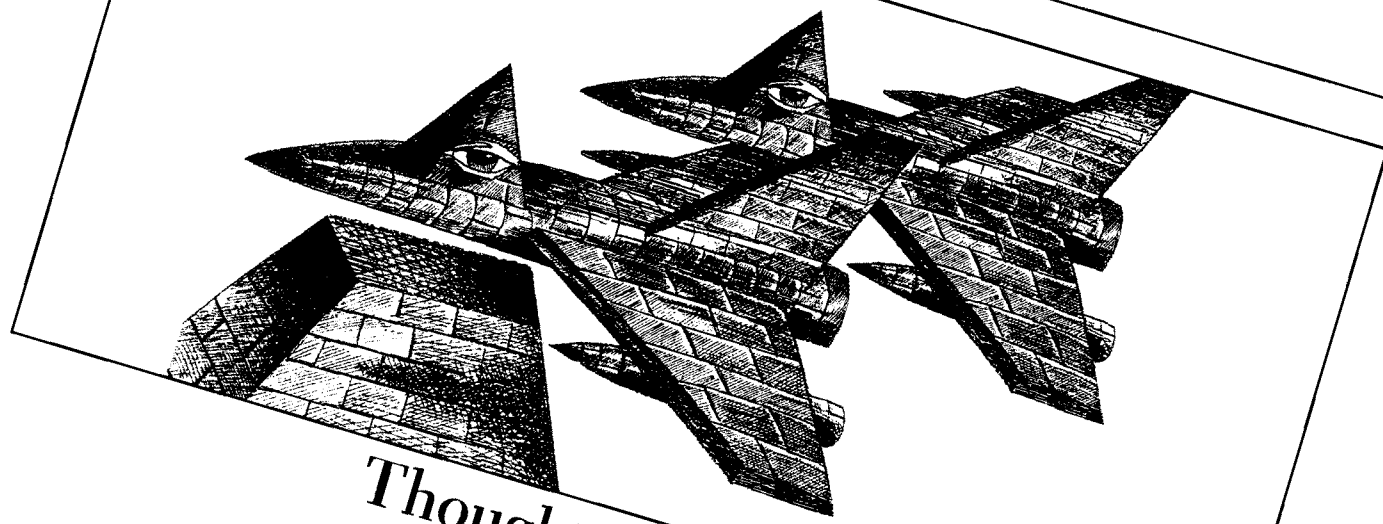

Igor Kopelnitsky

Thoughts of Empire

by F.W. Brownlow

When Mikhail Gorbachev declared that he was going to withdraw Russian troops from Afghanistan, people were so entranced by his supposed sincerity that they neglected more interesting aspects of the announcement. If it was genuine—and there was no convincing argument for thinking it was not—then it was the first sign, as those familiar with the vicissitudes of empire recognized, that the Russian will to domincer was weakening. The moment the besieged states of the West had been waiting for had arrived, and it passed almost unnoticed.

Having been a schoolboy under a headmaster who as late as 1947 was telling his pupils that to be accepted into the Indian Civil Service was an honor few men deserved and even fewer achieved, my credentials as an amateur empire-watcher are pretty good. What is more, the bones of my kinsmen are all over this globe, and when I was 15 or so and people began to ask what I wanted to do, one of my first answers was that the colonial service looked tempting. It was my father, until then the only realist I had ever met, who told me that by the time I left school there would be precious little left for a colonial servant to serve.

Liberal wisdom tells us that empires end because private virtue and public conscience prevail and that the result is progress. There is not much truth in that, nor in the left-wing view that empires end because history will have it so. Empires mostly end because imperialists get tired. Empires begin as great adventures promising immense rewards in wealth and self-esteem, but they demand commensurately great sacrifices, which, in time, prove unpayable. Too many sons and daughters go away and never return, and in time the emotional, moral, and economic discipline of empire exhausts the stay-at-homes as well. What kept the British Empire going as long as it did was the optimism and high spirits of several gencrations of upper-class schoolboys, trained for imperial administration in a peculiar, strictly regimented, and often fantastic system of education. Yet even schoolboys lose their enthusiasm, with the consequence that King-Emperor George V must have intuited when he asked on his deathbed, "What of the Empire?"

For the British Empire, the turning point was the Boer War. That war's difficulties and losses were a shock to a people that had fallen into the habit of comfort and power. When young Chesterton and his pro-Boer friends observed that the Empire was fighting the Boers for claiming the same independence that the British considered their birthright, a significantly large minority of their fellow subjects agreed. The conviction grew that in gaining an empire England had lost too much of its traditional character, and this feeling, joined to foreign competition and disapproval and to difficulties and discontents at home, provided moral cover for a process of disengagement from imperialism that two great wars could delay but not reverse.

Russian imperialism has nearly as long a history as British, although the Communist Empire we knew is a recent artifact, differing from the British in nearly every respect but one—that being an empire, it was based on the sacrifices of its people. In the case of Russia those sacrifices were so appalling that only a regime based on silence, lies, and brutality could have enforced them. Two things seem finally to have demoralized the Russian ruling class. First, there was the effect of the modern diffusion of information, speeded up by the vast, paranoid system of global surveillance that was part of Russia's state security apparatus. Russia's rulers poisoned themselves with information about the world they wanted to dominate. Second, into that situation came Ronald Reagan, who named the Russian Empire accurately before the world and who proved to be the first American President prepared to use

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American economic power to break the Empire's will.

When, therefore, Mr. Gorbachev announced his troop withdrawals, it was apparent that the turn had come. Not only had the Russians no more stomach for that fight, they had lost the support of their long-suffering population. The North-West frontier of what is now Pakistan had been an outpost of the British Empire because the passes of Afghanistan give access to the sub-continent and to the Indian Ocean. The czars had cast eyes of desire on Afghanistan, and the communists, who saw the whole subcontinent as a vacuum waiting to be filled, could read a map as well as their predecessors. Hence the Russian retreat from Afghanistan was portentous; the rest was a matter of time. One could speculate that the unraveling might take one year, two, or ten, or that it would be faster rather than slower because time itself seems to have accelerated in recent years; but one knew that in any case it was inevitable. What then seemed problematic, and remains so, was the reaction of America.

President Reagan's role was a departure from nearly fifty years of American policy. Like most Americans, Franklin Roosevelt disliked and suspected the British Empire and thought both Britain and the world would be friendlier without it. He also thought that the Russians, though uncouth and mysterious, espoused a recognizable version of his own ideas of social progress. American wealth saved Stalin, and American complaisance and indirect subsidy preserved his successors through the long period of exasperated, hostile, and reluctant cooperation that some publicist with a knack for paradox called the "cold war." He might just as well have called it the "hot peace." Nowadays we are expected to be grateful to the cold warriors for keeping that hostile peace, even though throughout the period one could not help noticing that the supposedly deadly rivals were agreed on some fundamental points—that since each, unlike former *imperia*, claimed to embody the popular will, it followed that the world was waiting for one of them to assume sovereignty of it and inaugurate the millennium. A fight to the finish being ruled out by physics and metaphysics, the rival empires came to an accommodation: each would hang on to what it had, limiting acquisition and loss to the peripheries.

Even so, these mighty opposites were reluctant to use their own forces, preferring to act through surrogates when possible. They were also pathetically eager to like, admire, and congratulate each other and very early on invented the "cultural exchange" as a means of doing so as often as possible. In this way, and without ever calling it that, America became an imperial state with all the trappings: immense naval, military, and diplomatic establishments abroad; a huge bureaucracy to keep the state militarily and ideologically prepared at home. Earlier in the century, European Christians, among them Belloc, Chesterton, and Bernanos, had diagnosed the tendency of democracies to drift in their own way and at their own speed toward totalitarianism. The postwar transformation of America into what it called with evasive self-congratulation a "superpower" seemed to bear them out, especially as evidence began to accumulate of behind-the-scenes cooperation with the so-called enemy. It was more important to men like Nixon and Kissinger that America and Russia should agree to maintain stability in their spheres of influence than that some hotheaded enthusiast should point out their differences.

By that standard, Ronald Reagan was a hotheaded enthusiast who loathed communism and despised big government. He had no intention of cooperating with the Russians, and he meant to dismantle as much of his own government as possible. Unfortunately, he was also a sentimentalist, unwilling to understand that the "big government" he despised was only the proximate cause of the deterioration of American life and that the real cause was the imperial state in which so much local, political, and patriotic capital, including his own, was invested. Whether necessary or unnecessary, a masquerade or a reality, that 45-year-long engagement of America in Europe and Asia had levied an immense toll on the American people—and no one had ever candidly told them so. Several times they balked at the load. Twice they elected conservative Presidents to deliver them from wars they were allowed to die in but not to win. Then they elected Ronald Reagan because they felt insulted and impotent, and he seemed to share their feelings. Each time, however, the people's resistance turned to the politicians' advantage; there was a mutual indulgence of feeling, some adjustments were made, and the truth remained untold.

America's venture into imperialism might have been tolerable, even touched with nobility, had it been honest. Let us take the pessimistic view and agree that, given current estimates of the balance of forces, John Kennedy had no alternative to backing down over Berlin and Lyndon Johnson had no alternative to "escalating" the war in Vietnam instead of winning it. Let us agree that the prospects were for a long game of attrition. Let us even agree that the Americans, whether by accident, design, or the guidance of Providence, played the game brilliantly. Why then did the politicians not have the guts, brains, or realism to describe it properly? President Kennedy's hollow Churchillian rhetoric about sacrifice was bad enough, especially for those who remembered the circumstances of the original. But we touched bottom when President Johnson entered the money markets and mortgaged the country to avoid telling the truth about the cost of Vietnam and his Great Society.

And how those costs have grown! The story of America's imperial debt is like a mutual fund advertisement in reverse: borrow a billion today, owe a trillion tomorrow. When the Berlin Wall finally opened, Chancellor Kohl of West Germany is said to have telephoned President Bush to thank America. And well he might. Inflation, debt, riots, unemployment, ruined cities and factories, Third World standards of transportation and other civic amenities: the American sacrifice in this imperial game has been immense—and possibly mortal.

The contradiction in President Reagan's policy was that, apparently without realizing it, he was an imperialist abroad and an anti-imperialist at home. Did he really think that American world hegemony was a luxury middle America could afford, like a second house, a third car, and a fourth television set? His Democratic opponents, by contrast, were and are imperialists at home and anti-imperialists abroad, incapable of understanding that the government that played at empire overseas was equally imperial at home, that the huge expansion in domestic government was the corollary of the expansion overseas. It is an iron rule of empire that the first conquest an imperial state makes is of its own citizenry. We now have an immense bureaucracy based on the premise that citizens are clients of the state. Most of the federal budget consists of payments to individuals under the guise of "entitlements," a fi-

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nancial practice whose real names are bribery and corruption.

Here in Massachusetts we have a vivid symbol of domestic imperialism in the spectacle of the Kennedys, a new-rich family that, having bought itself influence in the first period of government expansion under Roosevelt, has gone on to buy itself votes by distributing largess in the form of welfare services and defense contracts, thus turning Massachusetts into a rotten borough for Senator Kennedy and his younger kinfolk. The story of postwar American imperialism is inscribed in the careers of the Kennedys and men like them. Their political lives have been spent in symbiosis with the Russian Empire, and now that it has disintegrated they have two alternatives to self-reform: a full-blooded commitment to imperialism under the name of something like global democracy or an attempt to consolidate their power at home by the imposition of full-scale welfare-state socialism. Either course will ruin America, but as long as our own version of the *nomenklatura* retains its hold on the Congress and our institutions both are possible.

And yet even the Kennedys cannot abrogate the rules of empire. For a while in the heyday of the Cold War, imperial America could build roads, endow universities, preserve passenger trains, and subsidize the arts not, as in Europe, because these were the amenities of a civilized state, but because something called "national security" required them. Most people were prepared to go along with this pleasant fiction and to pay up. They could afford it, and the amenities were preserved after a fashion. Now the imperial bills have swollen beyond either our ability or willingness to pay, and while we have been indulging dreams of hope and glory, the new commercial powers of Japan and Europe have grown rich at our expense.

Sooner or later the truth will dawn that irrespective of moral judgments upon a terrible regime, the breakup of Russia was the final act of an immense tragedy. It would be salutary, too, if Americans could understand that the breakup was the kind of thing that happens to imperial states, and that when it happens it is always a rebuke to pride and arrogance.

So far, offered a choice, our rulers have opted for imperialism rather than the amenities, and public opinion of all shades has supported them in principle if not in particular cases. The idea that Americans have a right and an obligation to intervene in other countries' affairs in the name of moral and political progress is everywhere taken for granted. Left-wingers who objected to the invasion of Grenada would have liked us to take over Haiti. Democrats who objected to the invasion of Kuwait would like us to throw a little weight around in Ireland. The American Catholic bishops would like to dictate theology to the Pope. Lesbian feminists feel the imperial urge to spread the blessings of American feminism among the women of Africa, India, and South East Asia. Progressives who worried that the Cold War was a sin against historical inevitability want us to send teams of managers, money-lenders, and political scientists swarming all over the former Russian Empire. Even Pat Buchanan had visions of the Sixth Fleet bringing common sense to Yugoslavia, and it did candidate Clinton no harm at all to talk big about American intervention in Bosnia.

So the response of America to the breakup of Russia was, and remains, problematic. President Bush was an upper-class apparatchik who like others of his kind prided himself on his lack of imagination and his deference to habit. Because he shared with the electorate a mania for sports and a determination to win, it was probably inevitable that he should interpret the breakup as a big victory for America, equally inevitable that he should regret so complete a victory as unsporting and bad for the game. Neither he nor James Baker seemed prepared for the intense national emotions released by the liberation of Eastern Europe. But that hardly mattered. As his famous phrase about a "New World Order" indicated, as far as American policy was concerned, the only change was the removal of an obstacle and the addition of more clients to America's worldwide welfare system. Nothing in the presidential campaign suggests a change of policy under President Clinton. The man from Arkansas will probably enjoy playing emperor as much as any of his recent predecessors.

Sooner or later the truth will dawn that irrespective of moral judgments upon a terrible regime, the breakup of Russia was the final act of an immense tragedy. It would be salutary, too, if Americans could understand that the breakup was the kind of thing that happens to imperial states, and that when it happens it is always a rebuke to pride and arrogance. More immediately, we need to understand that the breakup has discredited the whole complex of ideas upon which that particular regime was based, and that insofar as those ideas remain active in the politics of Russia or of other nations, they remain dangerous. Who, after all, would ever have imagined that progressive ideas invented in 19th-century Europe would have reduced the inhabitants of a great modern state to the necessity of relearning the most basic human social arts and occupations—of buying and selling, for instance?

Here in America we are in no danger of forgetting how to buy and sell. Nonetheless, impelled by our own version of the progressive-millennialist bug, we have been discarding inherited social and cultural wisdom at an extraordinary rate, a process much accelerated in recent years by the contempt of our fashionable and influential left-wing for all traditional forms. The result is a radical uncivilizing most obvious in the antics of what we have learned to call the underclasses, but apparent in the behavior of all classes of society. The same feckless progressivism underlies our monstrous indebtedness: too many of us believed that irreversible economic progress would "grow" or develop us out of debt.

One consequence of the Russian breakup has been to make prophecy very difficult. All we now know for certain is that truths that are universally denied eventually prevail, and that the experience of their prevailing can be extremely unpleasant. One truth we should all be contemplating is that the ultimate social and financial cost of America's peculiar brand of unacknowledged imperialism might just be America itself.

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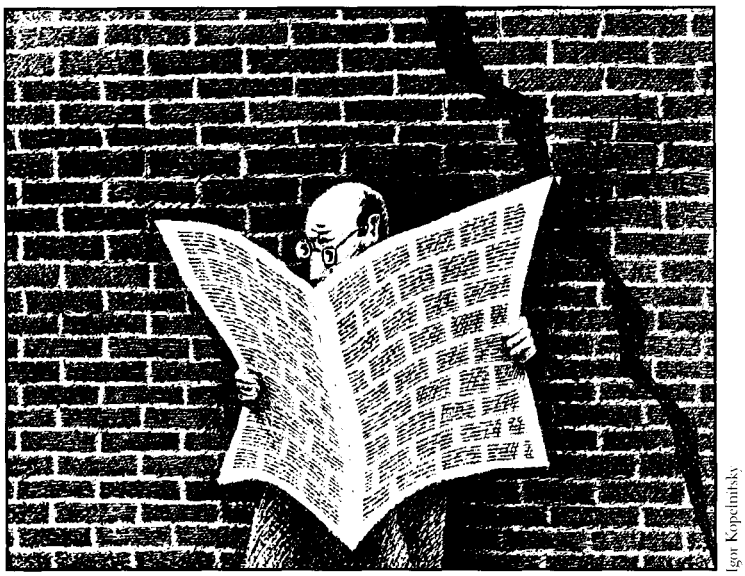
The New Right of the Old World

by Tomislav Sunic



Igor Kopelnitsky

Intellectual conservatism in Europe began its odyssey with Donoso Cortes in the 19th century, only to end its shipwrecked voyage a century later with Oswald Spengler. European conservatism has always been a panic-stricken response to the egalitarian torrents that have been sweeping over Europe since the American and French Revolutions. After 1945, the *anus mundi* of all European peoples, new liberal and socialist clerks essentially piggybacked on the political winners of World War II. For conservative intellectuals the arrival of liberal-socialist scribes meant that unless conservatism was married to the idea of Atlanticism—American market democracy and the ideology of human rights—it could not be heard, let alone listened to with impunity. The grand Inquisitors in the East, Beria and Yagoda, went even a step further; they put to death countless intellectuals who refused to believe in the radiant future and who voiced doubts about the socialist end of history. Almost without exception, conservative thinkers on both sides of the Wall were pilloried to the iron wall of silence.

With the sudden fall of communism in the East conservative convulsions were expected to start anew in the West. The recent strong showing of the Front National in France or of the DVU (Deutsche Volks Union) in Germany goes hand in hand with ever louder tremors in the East, accompanied, of course, by an ongoing decay of the leftist intellectual mystique in the West. Boiling ethnic blood is spilling over into every corner of the Eurasian continent.

Undoubtedly, conservative parties in Europe would hardly have garnered a vote had they not previously received tacit behind-the-scenes backing from conservative heavyweights. This time conservative thinkers have learned their lesson too well: they are hitting the block dressed in new and more respectable clothes, opening up new vistas of analysis, and resorting to a very impressive long-range artillery. The breakup of multicultural and multiethnic utopias in Central and Eastern Europe is only helping them to consolidate a new laboratory of ideas, whose volcanic forces are bringing Europe time and again into the vortex of world history.

Ironically, at the top of conservative revolutions in Europe stands socialist France. That intellectual conservatism is stronger today in France than in Germany should not come as a surprise. The German political and intellectual class still reels from what historian Armin Mohler calls the German neurosis. Germany's recent past makes it mandatory for all Germans, both young and old, to practice in chorus the rites of national masochism as well as to learn the compulsive mimicry of liberal democracy. By contrast, the freewheeling French intellectual scene has traditionally had more breathing room, despite the postwar intellectual terrorism sponsored by left-wing scribes. Ironically, German conservative thinkers are embraced today in France and Italy more than in their own country of origin. Essayist Ernst Jünger, political scientist Carl Schmitt, and zoologist and ethologist Konrad Lorenz are on the best-seller lists of many French and Italian pundits. By contrast, the ever present guise of political correctness requires every German to look twice over his shoulder before venturing to eye the books of his forgotten conservative compatriots. Other than the left-leaning *Schickimicki* writers, who roamed the globe and world academia—such as Günter Grass and Heinrich Böll—German intellectual history was designed to come to a definite end.

A Frenchman, Alain de Benoist, is today the most articulate European conservative thinker, and his shock troops—known as the "European New Right" or GRECE (*groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne*)—have done a spectacular job in retrieving the European conservative heritage. Moreover, Benoist and his acolytes never miss a single opportunity to declare total war against Freudo-Marxian scholasticism as well as the liberal theology of the market.

Alain de Benoist and the European New Right are nowhere near America's conservative shores. Whether because of their

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style or substance, temperament or tenor, they are far from American political conservatism and light-miles away from "neocons" and the American "new right." "I do not see any convergence between the American 'new right' and the French New Right," says Benoist. "The American Right is a fundamentalist contraction and a reactionary movement tied to the fundamental Bible. It stands for the primacy of the individual, apology for the market economy, individualism, and utilitarianism."

Short of the best common-denominator for the political and cultural substance that the New Right and Alain de Benoist try to embody, one could identify them as a revolutionary conservative, a socialist conservative, or better yet a neo-Nietzschean-national-nihilist current of thought. At the risk of simplifying his ideas one could probably depict him and his likes as direct heirs of the German conservative revolution of the early 1920's whose most visible standard-bearers were Werner Sombart in economy, Oswald Spengler in the philosophy of history, and Martin Heidegger in philosophy.

In Benoist's journals *Krisis* and *Nouvelle Ecole* one can read authors from all parts of the European political and scientific spectrum: from disillusioned leftists who refuse to sell out to liberalism, such as Régis Debray, to a French Gaullist military strategist like Pierre Gallois. In the New Right journals one can find articles signed by Roger Garaudy, a former Marxist erudite turned Muslim, as well as by famous Catholic conservative intellectuals of diverse persuasions. The New Right columns are open to those who challenge the dictatorship of economic well-being and reject the self-censorship of modern liberal democracies. Topics in *Krisis* and *Nouvelle Ecole* range from sociobiology to linguistics and include lengthy scholarly pieces on European metaphysics and Indo-European archeology.

Benoist stresses that a political movement or a political party has no chance of success unless it first develops a strategy for sophisticated cultural warfare. The reason conservative parties and movements in Europe and America look so emasculated and weak is because of their cultural mediocrity and, above all, their failure to culturally infiltrate academia and the media—two real centers of political power. He neatly calls his cultural offensive the "Gramsciism of the right." Gramsci knew all too well that one does not captivate the masses through the endless regurgitation of economic slogans: rather the masses flock to those who best know how to offer attractive political romanticism, which in the case of neo-Marxism has been pompously propagandized as "leftist sensibility." Keeping in mind Gramsci on the one hand and castrated American conservatives on the other, one will immediately understand why Marxian and egalitarian anthropologies and methodologies are, paradoxically, much more alive today in the American academy than anywhere else in the world.

Benoist has correctly said that French intellectuals are not only arrogant but also corrupt. Until relatively recently, French intellectuals wallowed in the unabashed praise of long-haired Maoism and Stalinism, only to wake up as Yves Saint Laurent-two-piece-suited disciples of liberalism. Once upon a time French intellectuals staged protests against the American involvement in Vietnam: today they are urging the United States to impose global democracy in every corner of the world. From the pinnacle of Mao to the Rotary Club there is, indeed, no distance to travel. The European New Right notes that, morphologically, both liberalism and socialism have grown from the same universalist and egalitarian tree, except that liberalism has been more successful in providing egalitarian fruits. Now, according to the New Right, liberal-socialism (or social-liberalism) needs to be overthrown by a return to the roots of the organic concept of the state.

The New Right's criticism of both the modern left and right has predictably reduced its visibility in France and in the rest of Europe. Its ideas are not in vogue, and its access to the European TV "videosphere" is still hampered by many who fear losing their pseudo-intellectual aura. Moreover, the New Right's criticism of Hollywood-style political surrealism and the one-dimensional American society has significantly deprived it of a transatlantic following, let alone of objective scholarly assessment. The New Right may never enter the American political hit-parade, because its penchant for the tragic and its belief in life as *polemos* stand in sharp contrast to the ideology of progress and the liberal cult of historical optimism.

Unlike other conservative thinkers, Benoist must receive some credit for having remained intellectually untainted. In contrast to other French intellectuals and groupings, his pedigree points to a man who has sternly refused any type of collaboration. In the 1970's he was the first to lambast Marxism and gulag democracy; today, when European "sixty-eighters" are massively converting to Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, he is first to assault the monotheism of the market and American global democracy. Temperamentally, Benoist and the European New Right seem to be more on the left than on the right. Culturally, however, they are at home with Homer and Heraclitus. Indeed, the European New Right may be easily mistaken for a leftist current of thought insofar as it has taken up the case of all threatened cultures and destinies: from Albanians to Zulus; from Tibetans to Tyrolians. Two years ago, the European New Right became an objective ally of those leftists who criticized George Bush's crusade against Iraq. Benoist is always uneasy with intellectual and academic Manichaeism, which tries to ram him into one single intellectual category. "Personally, I am totally indifferent to being on the right or the left. At the moment these ideas are on the right, but not necessarily of the right. I can easily imagine situations where these ideas could be on the left." While it is intellectually commendable today to ridicule Marxism, Benoist prefers instead to open up new battlefronts against one-world democracy, anomie, and decadence, whose main carrier he sees as liberal ideology. And he goes into much detail to explain the origin and the entropy of liberal market democracy.

Benoist notes that the prime enemy today is not Marxism or liberalism; the real enemy is the holy trinity of egalitarianism, economism, and universalism. He believes these ideological substrata have filtered out, over thousands of years, directly from the Bible. The moral? One must first demolish biblical mentality and its political-theological dualism before facing off its liberal and socialist secular offshoots. In their numerous books, whose topics range from philosophy to the critique of literature, Benoist and his *confrères* use ammunition borrowed from Spengler and Heidegger. For him, liberalism and communism are basically secular transpositions of Judeo-Christian anthropology; once Europe rejects biblical monotheism, it will better learn to appreciate the plurality of ideas and mores, as well as come to respect the "polytheism" of different destinies, races, and cultures. In short, Europe will learn how to

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appraise otherness and also how to accept the innate differences of all human beings. Only then will Europe be equipped to weather the storm of egalitarian and universalist temptations. Egalitarianism and universalism are the worst forms of *inclusive racism*, destroying cultural and ethnic identities, whether in the name of Manifest Destiny or of the Communist Manifesto.

It is no surprise that the demanding ideas of the New Right have never swayed the majority of European conservatives, who in most cases continue to express their anti-egalitarian feelings through integral Catholicism or Lutheranism. Nor has the New Right found a supportive ear among the chiliastic left, which is quick to dub its cultural elitism an elegant garb for intellectual fascism.

Democracy and liberalism have been standard topics for the New Right to dwell on. Following in the footsteps of Carl Schmitt, Benoist argues that liberalism is incompatible with democracy. Liberalism limits political power whereas democracy expands the political power of the people. "The formula 'one man, one vote' is not a democratic expression. What is democratic is 'one citizen, one vote,'" says Benoist. The concept of citizen, which Benoist uses, must be understood as adherence to a homogenous community; one is a citizen if one belongs to a historic community. Genuine democracy in multiethnic countries, such as the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, India, or America, is therefore impossible to achieve. Once democratic impulses attempt to find their way into such multiethnic countries, the ethnic patchwork begins to break up and civil war looms large. So-called democracy in atomized and individualistic liberal systems, which usually operate under the "one man, one vote" formula, means essentially "one vote, one (expandable) consumer."

Following Benoist's logic one must not rule out the possibility that, after events in Los Angeles, the American melting pot may easily turn into a Yugoslav-like cauldron. Similarly, in multiethnic Berlin or Marseille an Arab or a Turkish immigrant will always conceive of democracy as something that preserves and consolidates his ethnic roots in a new historical community—a procedure that, in the years to come, may lead to all sorts of urban warfare.

On the wider geopolitical level, the New Right sees in Germany a major player in Europe's future, possibly in tandem with Russia. Unity of Europe, yes, but not a 7-Eleven type of market-Maastricht Europe. European unity can only be achieved as a cultural and political confederation in the form of empire. In his last intervention, *L'idée d'Empire* (The Idea of Empire), Benoist writes favorably about the Austro-Hungarian legacy, which unlike centralistic English and French notions of empire, never attempted to mould a sense of nationhood by physically destroying or assimilating smaller adjacent ethnic groups. The Second German Empire, like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, had strong centers, but it also had strong peripheries. In an age of rising nationalism and xenophobia, Europeans may be well-advised to consider this model again. At present, however, contrary to Benoist's wishes, it looks as if Europe may soon end up with a dozen Monaco-like ministates. Whether European unity can, as Benoist would like to see, be achieved remains doubtful. European unity appears as distant a pipe dream as it has always been. Looking back, Charlemagne may remain the first and the last emperor who managed to bring Europeans together.

The European New Right celebrates today its 20th birthday. Its intellectual and scholarly contribution during the past two decades has been remarkable. It has provided a new stimulus for the European intellectual scene, and by refusing categorization or labeling it has frequently bewildered both its friends and foes. But its long-term political realism has already been vindicated. "Nothing is foreseeable," says Benoist, "because man is unpredictable." The fall of the Wall, the erosion of Versailles and Trianon architecture, the end of pan-Slavism, are confirming Benoist's predictions of unpredictability. One must agree with him that the end of history is nowhere near on the horizon. What we are witnessing, again and again, writes Benoist, is the majestic return of history. c

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Moses Descending, 1993

by John Frederick Nims

The burning questions of our time? They're burning,
That's all, as Troy did once. The ashes stay.
It's not with such concern our hearts are churning:
What moves the star by night, the sun by day
Hints at a primal *Why?* beyond the headlines,
Beyond the mole-eyed scientist's surmise.
Fiercer than any hunger in the breadlines,
To know! to know! is the hunger in our eyes.

But how? In a world by glutes and cleavage haunted,
Horoscope, crystal, junk bonds, fads and trends,
Gospel on T-shirts, string bikinis flaunted
To "make a statement." Moses, lo! descends,
Waves plastic tablets with gilt lettering:
"Good is what feels good, people. Do your thing!"

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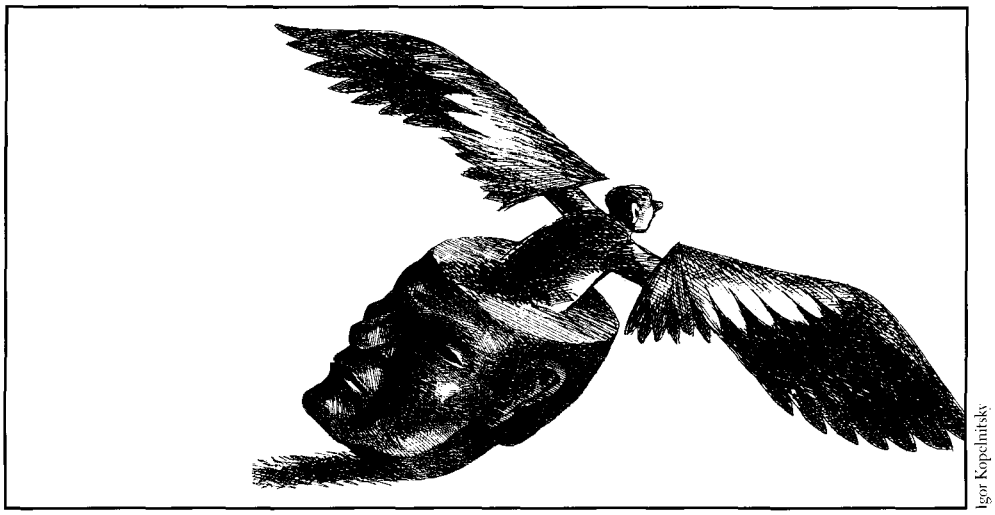
The Consequence of Ideas

The Future of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe

by Mihajlo Mihajlov



Igor Kopelnitsky

Unusual news is arriving from the former Soviet Union: leading democrats such as Yuri Afanasyev, Yelena Bonner, and many others are publicly protesting against the management of Radio Liberty. The immediate cause of their protest is Radio Liberty's decision to drop one of its most popular programs, "In the Country and in the World," whose very title was a reference to Andrei Sakharov. The program provided a forum for thought-provoking consideration of important issues, the issues with which Russia's intelligentsia has occupied itself in its long struggle for the liberation it is now beginning to enjoy. But the show has been replaced by a more conventional collection of news reports. This turn of events is not without importance, symbolic and real. Until a few years ago, Radio Liberty's reputation was secure because it was vilified by the Soviet authorities while loved and praised by the creative intelligentsia, the most important segment of its audience. Today the situation is different.

Radio Liberty has recently opened an office in Moscow. There was even an official decree from President Yeltsin, thanking it for help during the coup attempt and instructing authorities to provide it with office space and to facilitate its operations in every way. Last year, Radio Free Europe offices were opened in all the capitals of Eastern Europe. Russian television and newspapers now quote almost daily from the Radios' broadcasts.

Gorbachev, during a recent visit to Germany, stated that broadcasting by Radio Liberty is important for continued democratic development in his country. The same view of Radio Free Europe was earlier expressed by heads of state Havel, Walesa, and Antall of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, respectively. RFE and RL were nominated by the Foreign Minister of Estonia as candidates for the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. Walesa and others supported the nomination.

To understand the shift from praise to criticism, it is necessary to examine two recent events. The first was the Report of a Presidential Task Force on U. S. Government International Broadcasting, which appeared in December 1991. The second was the publication in Moscow, at about the same time, of a book by Anatoly Gladilin, a well-known novelist and dissident and former editor of one of Radio Liberty's cultural programs. The title of the book—*I Was Murdered by Pell, the Beast*—is meaningless to most Americans, but quite easily understood by anyone associated with the Radios: "Pell" happens to be the name of the man who has been president of the Radios since 1985.

George Bush probably established the task force with an eye to budgetary savings through a merger of the Radios and the official Voice of America. Despite this, the bipartisan task force argued against merger and in favor of continued support for the Radios. It warmly praised their role in helping to win the Cold War. Indeed, it stated that monies spent on international broadcasting were "among the most useful national security dollars well spent during this century. They sent out words not bullets, ideas not bombs—and they broke down a wall and helped break up an empire." It advised continued financing of RFE until the end of the century and of RL into the 21st century. At the same time, it repeatedly pointed out a need to redirect and revitalize the Radios by changing their mission from that of a surrogate medium—a substitute for the free media and sources of accurate information that peoples under totalitarianism lacked—into an alternative medium, an alternative to formerly communist media or to new media that have yet to establish traditions of discipline or integrity.

In contrast to the presidential report, Gladilin's book was half-fiction, half-autobiography. It presented the story of a writer, famous in the Soviet Union, who was fired from RL's

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Paris office in 1987. In a move to reduce the intellectual content of the Radios, management declared that it had to cut back the staff in Paris in order to save money and followed the principle "last hired, first fired." The issues in the book, from that devious move to all the other problems of recent years, are very much the issues that are now generating most of the protest in Russia against RL management.

A large part of Gladilin's book is devoted to depicting the bureaucracy of the Radios, which he compares to the Soviet *nomenklatura*. If the Radios were once staffed by creative professionals, journalists and philosophers, commentators and announcers, with a small layer of American management on top, today the layers of management have piled one atop the other while the number of writers beneath them grows smaller and smaller. For each journalist, Gladilin mentions with regret, there is a *nachalnik*—a boss (usually titled director or deputy director or assistant director)—who knows less but has more authority, so that there is even more supervision than in the old Soviet ideological enterprises. The basic goal of the bureaucracy is to increase its numbers—elevate its ranks, provide itself with privileges while explaining to the creative staff that there are no funds—and preserve its own positions. It is not dependent on the market; it is appointed and supported according to other criteria. The management behaves like feudal lords in its treatment of the journalists. It seems to be trying to dismantle everything that made the Radios great. In Gladilin's opinion, the main concern of the management is to not broadcast anything that might draw unwanted attention, and that means not broadcasting anything too controversial, too interesting, too useful. The result is the exact opposite of the kind of seminal presentations that made the Radios so important a part of developments in the countries to which they broadcast.

The "Pell" in the title of Gladilin's book stands not so much for the Radios' president as it does their entire management. The book gives the impression that the American bureaucracy at the Radios has become, for many of the dissidents and émigrés working for them, a bizarre replica of the bureaucratic apparatus of their former countries. The picture of America that this bureaucracy presents—overbearing and undereducated—has not helped to build respect for this country. While many praise America's decision to create the broadcasts in the first place , when they see how the Radios are actually run, they nevertheless end up appalled. Gladilin, along with his Russian countrymen, has long experienced bureaucracies that preach one thing while practicing another. And if there is one thing that could destroy the Radios' effectiveness, he shows, this is it.

The bureaucracy has typically responded to this kind of criticism by writing off all dissidents as troublemakers. The grain of truth in this easily obscures the broader issues, especially for the bureaucrat: whether regimentation of the creative works of the dissidents is in fact necessary or justified and whether ideas are now discussed timidly for professional reasons or for fear of even more timid people higher up. People who accomplished heroic acts against the genuinely fearsome bureaucracy of the old communist dictatorships can hardly be expected to bend in fear to the social pressures of a Western bureaucracy.

With the arrival of *glasnost*, Gladilin points out, people who had previously praised the Radios and who continued to admire what they represent, began to get the impression that they were more heavily censored than the Soviet press. Meanwhile, at the Radios, the censors, or self-censors, leaked to the press their view that they were "professionals" locked in a struggle against the "Cold War ideologues" at the Radios, who were trying to get the Radios to broadcast what the censors considered to be a ridiculous proposition: that the Soviet Union and its economy were coming apart at the seams. True professionalism is valuable indeed, but the Gladilin book raises the question of whether in this case the slogan of professionalism was not being used in a self-deceiving way by the supervisory community.

The way to make a career at the Radios, in Gladilin's portrayal, is by blindly following orders, no matter how badly served the Radios may be, and by not disagreeing with superiors, no matter how desperately they might need improved insight. This may help explain why communist spies often had so much success in rising to high positions at the Radios, the last case being Oleg Tumanov, Acting Chief Editor of the Russian Language Service—the biggest and most important section of both Radios—who returned to the Soviet Union in 1986 and made anti-American, anti-Radio propaganda for the KGB on Soviet TV. For years, there was a joke at the Radios that they were under the direction of American bureaucrats who do not understand anything about communist countries and spies who understand everything only too well.

If Gladilin is right, then one would have to say that the wrong people—the managers attacked in the novel, not the author and others like him—have received the applause for the Radios in the last several years and the glory for their role in the fall of communism. And in fact, the most important dissident writers either were fired from the Radios, as Gladilin was, or were, like the poet Alexander Galich, in constant conflict with their management.

If Gladilin's thesis is correct, then the glory of the Radios has not come from broadcasting news and "news features," which were possible to get in almost identical form from the BBC, the VOA, and Deutsche Welle—all of which had periods when they were not jammed at all. It came instead from the famous writers and dissidents, such as Galich and Gladilin, who staffed the Radios; from Nekrasov, Aksyonov and Voinovich, who freelanced for the Radios; and from dissidents like Yelena Bonner, wife and widow of Sakharov, who did not hesitate to cooperate with the Radios long before they were legalized in the Soviet Union at the end of 1988.

It seemed, to many observers, that from the very beginning of the Radios there was an ongoing conflict within them between two philosophies: one, that they were supposed to be primarily a source of free and accurate information; the other, that they were also to be a source of new and creative ideas in the sphere of politics and culture—a surrogate means of communication within communist societies about their politics and culture. The legislation that originally established the Radios and the repeated decisions to fund them all contain references to "ideas and information" and almost invariably refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or to the connection between freedom and the free flow of ideas. During most of the history of the Radios, much of the management supported that concept. But, Gladilin suggests, with the present rise of a "class" of managers, committed to their careers and not to ideas, those who respected the minds of the broadcasters have left. It was only natural that the new management

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"class" would support the substitution of "news and information" for "ideas and information." This is something they can more readily quantify and thus understand. It does not involve quality, something which they find difficult to discuss; it is easier to manage a flow of information than a flow of ideas. Even the Soviet leadership understood this more than a quarter of a century ago and was far more ready to allow "news" than discussion of ideas. There has been a widespread misunderstanding in America that the dead hand of Stalin continued to keep all information out of the Soviet Union until the arrival of *glasnost*. In fact, it is not information but rather what thinking people will *do* with information that frightens oppressors. They are not afraid that information will change the world, but they know that ideas do. They fear debates, discussions, philosophy, argument, anything controversial, unproved, unquantified. The demand for a purely informational role was always in conflict with the need for talented commentary. Management has increasingly come to prefer "news features," that is, translations of articles from the Western press, over genuine commentaries.

Today the Radios are at a crossroads. Their future mission, indeed their future existence, is in question. Yet the report of the President's task force already contains the seed of the solution. Its central recommendation—to change the role of the Radios from a surrogate medium of facts to an alternative medium for the exchange and enrichment of ideas—is exactly what is needed. It is at heart the same thing for which creative journalists, commentators, writers, and dissidents at the Radios have fought for decades. But the Radios do not have a future if they are limited to being a surrogate source of information, and this is becoming the dominant activity at the Radios. Even with the new offices in the formerly communist countries and with the dozens of stringers who are working for them, the domestic media can generally do this job no worse than the Radios. The reason is simple: freedom of the press has led to numerous new independent newspapers and radio stations throughout the formerly communist world. They have real advantages over the Radios; it will be impossible and unnecessary to compete with them in the sphere of mere news.

To be sure, the predominantly informational role was important during the attempted August coup: for three days out of 365, the Radios basked in their old glory of being a surrogate source of information. This vital role should be enough to justify continuation of the Radios as a defense against any backsliding.

Were there to be another coup attempt, one suspects there would be a better effort by the putschists to control the flow of information. In the August coup all they could do was control central television; they did not break RL's links. Since then, however, the Radios' management has decided to shut down the monitoring unit that, by recording and transcribing what Soviet and post-Soviet radio, TV, and electronic media had to say, has kept the Radios abreast of events in a way that no other radio broadcast from abroad could match, in a way that compensated in significant degree for the immediate presence of domestic media. Once that monitoring capability is gone it will not be easy to restore. Those who plan the next coup, and there will be such plans, will only have to cut telephone lines to the Radios' bureaus and stringers to slice through the bonds that tie the Radios inextricably into the fabric of the countries to which they broadcast.

Gene Pell, president of the Radios, has argued that the most important role for the Western Radios should be that of providing a "Marshall Plan for ideas." This very formulation shows how, even when management is trying to spread ideas, it finds ideas hard to cope with. It is moderately useful, but dangerously insufficient, if the Radios see their role as providing listeners with translations of articles from the Western press. Lessons in American democracy are welcome, but it is necessary to keep in mind that the Radios' listeners are also inheritors of a great historical culture, that much of America's experience is peculiar and not universal, that there is no need to borrow from another culture what one can find in his own history. It is necessary to be "interactive" with the great cultures of the people to whom we broadcast and to communicate in the "language" of these cultures, not just, *e.g.*, in the Russian language. In any dialogue, in any culture, or between any cultures, acceptance is the key, making something one's own. The American example of the Western experience can be inspected and adapted, but it cannot be transplanted. It can contribute to what happens elsewhere only after someone else has incorporated what he wants, modified, tested, rejected, fitted together with other ideas from his own traditions. Above all, it cannot be packaged, counted, and delivered like foreign aid. If the Radios' management cannot practice tolerance and encouragement of intellectual curiosity, they cannot teach it.

It is sad that an enterprise created by Americans—the Radios—functions in a style so similar to the Soviet's. Perhaps the style is similar because the Radios are government based and do not have to satisfy the marketplace—the audience. At the same time this suggests that institutional structure rather than human nature creates the mindless processing and calculating of quantifiable bits of information that used to characterize Soviet society. It gives, then, some reason for hope that, if Russians find themselves in different, market circumstances, their bureaucratic overhang will wither away.

In a sense, the problem facing the Radios is similar to the problem always facing the world: the opposition between the easiest management criterion, quantity, and the more difficult criteria of creativity and responsiveness to individual situations. Is the President's task force correct in viewing the Radios as needed in the future? To be sure, yes it is. The Radios are the strongest single instrument of American influence inside the formerly communist states. It is also correct in pointing out that the future is unpredictable. Reactionary turns can recur. Nationalists can create an unstable situation. The Radios should continue to exist. I would go even further and say that all the reasons that existed in the early 50's to establish the Radios today provide justification for initiating broadcasting to the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and of China and East Asia.

All of this can happen, if the Radios will change their structure and adapt their programmatic focus as advised by the task force. Employees at the Radios often jokingly ask, "When will *glasnost* and *perestroika* come to RFE and RL?" The dream of the cultural staff at the Radios is that this day will finally dawn. As if to express their dream, the Gladilin novel has the president of the Radios going to Moscow to receive a decoration for having fought together with Gorbachev for *glasnost*. Perhaps the decades-old criticisms of the Radios can finally help them. If the changes are ever to come, they must come now. c

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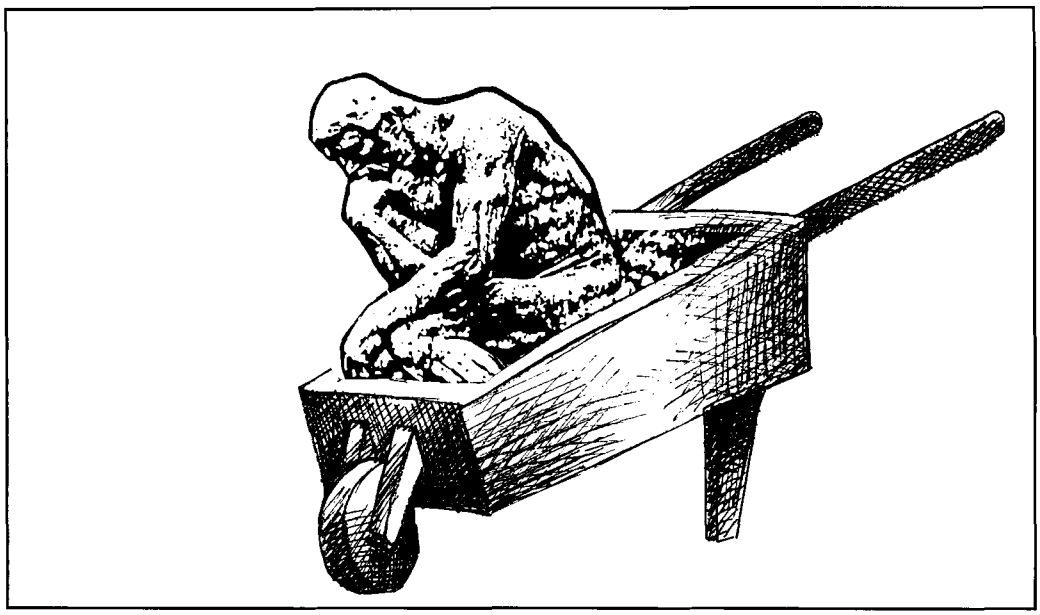
The Politics of Employment

by Richard Vedder and Lowell Gallaway



Igor Kopelnitsky

"Jobs Issue Dominates Defense Cuts Debates," the *Los Angeles Times* proclaimed in a recent article. The story informed us that the end of the Cold War has brought about layoffs for many workers in the defense industry. This, in turn, has led members of Congress to wonder if the reductions in military spending associated with the end of the Cold War should be reconsidered.

Variations on the same theme have been a subject of discussion in many communities around the nation. "Cold War's End Devastating to Defense Jobs" was a headline in the *Atlanta Journal*. In Boston, the *Globe* reported "Study Cites Defense Cuts' Harm to Northeast." All across the country, concerned citizens are alarmed that reductions in the nation's defense budget will create significant unemployment and aggravate the sluggishness in economic conditions that has characterized recent years. In a study for the Congress, the U. S. Office of Technology Assessment estimated that the defense cutbacks may well cost the nation 250,000 jobs *a year* until the year 2001. All told, some 2.5 million jobs could be lost. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) opined that the defense reductions are "going to have certainly a detrimental effect on jobs in America." George Bush, in proposing a multibillion-dollar job training program, stressed the importance of retraining defense-related workers.

Is the concern justified? Should we slow down our reductions in defense to deal with the inevitable unemployment problem? Should we initiate, as Senator Nunn, George Bush, Bill Clinton, and others suggested, new training programs designed to help unemployed workers from defense industries? History suggests that the correct answers to these questions is a resounding "no."

By far the most dramatic shift of resources from war to peace came at the end of World War II. Two things about the postwar demobilization make it particularly instructive. First, it was by far the largest conversion of resources from war to peace in the nation's history. Second, it happened rapidly. In June 1945, some 12,130,000 Americans served in the Armed Forces of the United States, nearly 9 percent of the country's population (the equivalent today would be 22 million persons). Exactly one year later, this number had shrunk almost 75 percent to just over three million. Adding the nearly 900,000 civilians released from the federal payroll, total federal employment fell by precisely ten million—in 12 months. And that does not count hundreds of thousands of others who lost their jobs working in privately owned defense plants.

Like today, economists and others were worried that the end of the war would bring about massive unemployment. The dean of American Keynesian economists, Alvin Hansen, writing in 1943, said, "When the war is over, the government cannot just disband the Army, close down munitions factories, stop building ships, and remove all economic controls." Yet that is exactly what it did, with no major ill effects. In 1945, as the war was ending, prominent Keynesian economist Robert Nathan predicted six million unemployed by the spring of 1946, implying an approximate 10 percent unemployment rate. He was optimistic compared with some. Veteran Department of Labor economist Isador Lubin predicted that as many as nine million would be out of work—roughly a 14 percent unemployment rate. Virtually no economist forecast postwar prosperity. The forecasters, almost all newly converted disciples to the thinking of English economist John Maynard Keynes, figured that the decline in "aggregate demand" associated with a drastic reduction in federal spending would send the nation into an economic tailspin.

As we document in our new book *Out of Work: Unemploy-*

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ment and Government in Twentieth-Century America, published by Holmes & Meier for the Oakland-based Independent Institute, the postwar resumption of the Great Depression never came. Unemployment, widely projected to reach double digits, only reached an annual rate of 3.9 percent in 1946, lower than the long-run average rate of unemployment in American economic history, before or since.

America went, virtually overnight, from having an extraordinarily expansionary fiscal policy, with a budget deficit equal to about 20 percent of the national output, to the most contractionary fiscal policy in modern American economic history, with a substantial budget *surplus*. In relation to today's economy, it was equivalent to going from a budget deficit of well over *one trillion dollars* to a budget surplus of over $200 billion—in one year. The federal government spending component of gross domestic product fell 46 percent in 1946—and that ignores inflation. At the same time, the creation of money also slowed substantially.

How did it happen? How was the American economy able to absorb millions of returning veterans and munition plant employees without major retraining programs, fiscal interventions, or the like? How was the nation able to absorb a significant reported decline in real output without massive joblessness? The answer is simple: the invisible hand of the labor market worked, lowering the price of labor (what we more technically term the adjusted real wage) so that hiring civilian workers was profitable for employers. Aiding the transition process was the removal of tight wartime wage and price controls that had stifled the operations of free markets.

One of the least well-known lessons in American economic history is that the market mechanism solves problems of unemployment and depressed output and that government interventions designed to solve those problems typically add to rather than alleviate them. The best example is the Great Depression. A well-meaning but economically ignorant Herbert Hoover thought economic depression could be averted by paying workers high wages, increasing purchasing power and thus the demand for goods. Hoover's high-wage policy, followed scrupulously by an American business establishment that revered him, in effect priced labor out of the market, preventing the falling wages that could and would have ended the downturn that began in the fall of 1929. After 1933, the Depression was needlessly prolonged when Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal similarly pushed wages up by such legislation as the National Industrial Recovery Act and the Wagner Act, thereby keeping unemployment rates in the double digits until 1940, far longer than in any other major industrial nation.

More recently, the 1990 recession began when wage increases, which had been about 4 percent a year including fringe benefits in the late 1980's, spurted to an extraordinary 9.2 percent in the second quarter of that year. Again, government policies were largely responsible. On the very first date of that quarter, the federal minimum wage increased more than 13 percent, raising wages for millions of lower-skilled workers and pricing some of them out of the market.

Returning to the postwar demobilization, unemployment was partly averted by the voluntary withdrawal from the labor force of millions of women who returned to the role of homemaker and also of a smaller number of men who had involuntarily served in the labor force as draftees but who now returned home to become students. At the same time, real wages (money wages corrected for the effects of inflation on purchasing power) declined somewhat, as the removal of controls allowed prices to reach levels dictated by the laws of supply and demand.

Before the postwar transition began, Keynesian economists were worried that the fall in demand (government spending) associated with the war's end would cause a renewal of the Great Depression. When that did not happen they quickly invented a new explanation for the smoothness of the transition: "pent-up" demand for consumer and investment goods prevented a fall in aggregate demand. Keynesian demand-side economics, so it was argued, won out anyhow. The American economics profession blithely accepted this new interpretation, despite massive evidence that it simply did not fit the facts. Keynesian economics' final triumph in the world of ideas came at the very time the facts were demonstrating its fundamental fallacies.

It is true that American consumers desperately wanted durable goods after years of relative deprivation. Yet the transition to a peacetime economy was almost entirely completed before sales of big-ticket consumer goods reached normal levels. For example, automobile, appliance, and new housing productions did not return to normal peacetime levels until 1947 or even 1948, long after almost all the peacetime transition had been made. Automobile production in 1946 was more than 40 percent below the levels of 1940 and 1941.

The *total* spending on all goods and services in 1946 was less than in 1945, yet unemployment remained low. In the Keynesian demand-side way of looking at things, a move from deficit to surplus in federal budgets should be accompanied by massive declines in spending (partly because of a "multiplier" effect); lower spending, in turn, should lead to massive unemployment. It simply did not happen. Total spending did fall, but labor costs also fell as a proportion of sales in 1946 and 1947, making hiring increasingly attractive and preventing the surplus of unemployed labor envisioned by Hansen and other Keynesians. If the price is right, workers will be hired. In 1946, the price was right.

Similarly, the smaller demobilizations following World War I and the Korean War were handled adroitly by the market with little governmental involvement. In 1920, the nation experienced a major downturn that can be attributed to the bursting of an inflationary bubble created by the Federal Reserve financing of World War I with monetary expansion. Fortunately for the economy, activist President Woodrow Wilson was incapacitated by poor health and the new President in 1921, Warren Harding, was philosophically opposed to intervention. By 1923, the unemployment rate was below 4 percent, thanks to a downward adjustment in wages that made labor more attractive. The modest demobilization after the Korean War was similarly handled well by the market, because Dwight Eisenhower was a fiscal conservative not inclined to begin new jobs programs for returning Korean veterans (a mild recession in 1954 may not have been caused by demobilization and was over in any case within a year).

The absorption of a million or even two million military and civilian defense employees over a period of several years should be no problem for the American economy. After all, that economy added an average of 200,000 new employees to the civilian labor force each *month* from late 1982 to mid-1990. One thing, however, could threaten a smooth transition: governmental interference in labor markets, which raises the

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real cost of labor per unit of output, thus pricing workers out of work.

The recent stagnation in American labor markets is largely attributable to rising labor costs associated with government policies. Not only has government directly contributed to higher costs by increasing the minimum wage, it has indirectly raised labor costs by extending unemployment insurance benefits (as of this writing) some three times in less than 18 months. Receiving in many cases $200 or more in weekly benefits for over a year, unemployed workers become finicky about accepting job opportunities. In the jargon of economists, their "reservation" (minimally accepted) wage has risen. This has pushed up wages and led to fewer workers being hired.

Even more threatening to defense workers worried about losing their jobs is the potentially adverse effects of new regulatory initiatives. For labor to receive *both* higher real wages and greater job opportunities, the productivity of labor must rise. Each widget-maker must make more widgets per hour if the standard of living is to rise. Well-intentioned legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the 1990 Clean Air Act, and recent civil rights legislation all have provisions that will probably lower the productivity of labor, raising real wages per unit of output and pricing some labor out of the market. To illustrate, suppose the disabilities statute is interpreted to mean that aisles on buses must be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. Suppose that now new buses can only sit three persons across whereas previously they seated four. The productivity of bus drivers may thereby be reduced by upwards of 25 percent. This may force higher fares, cause declining passenger volume, and lead to a layoff of bus drivers.

In short, the best thing the government can do for military personnel and workers in defense plants is to leave them and the markets in which they compete alone. History tells us that interfering in the markets will likely create, not eliminate, unemployment. The invisible hand of the labor market has historically done a remarkably effective job in absorbing millions of Americans into civilian jobs, and it can do the same today. c

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Classical Civilization

by Jared Carter

Entryways, then, in courtyards—and the brick stairs
up past the landings, the oak doors. Someone would be
expecting you, would take your duffle coat, shake out
your umbrella, leave it there in the hallway to dry.

I remember most the rooftops seen through the rain,
the dark slate glistening, the stone towers. Tea—
or sometimes a glass of sherry—and then a few minutes
to admire the view, to look out over that sombre world.

There was always a windowseat, off the main room, with
red leather cushions, and narrow mullions, and panes
of spidery glass, or bull's-eye, or perhaps a dragon
painted there, breathing sparks and fire into the gloom.

What we said—what was being gone over, for the paper
that was due at the end of the term—all that mattered,
once, I suppose. There were things in the room, too,
books on the coffee table, framed prints, Persian rugs—

I could walk into that same room now, and pick them up,
touch them, and nothing would be changed. It would be
the same grey, even light through those windows, the talk
still the same, the eclecticism, the leisurely pace—

I could overhear that conversation, it would seem to be
about ideas, about things that needed to be done well
if done at all, about the right way to proceed—and yet
nothing really happened, it was only an afternoon visit,

some others would be dropping around in a few minutes,
we might be meeting for dinner in another college, or
going out for Chinese food—a short stroll across the Green—
out together, into the evening, into the mist and rain.

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God and Man in Jail

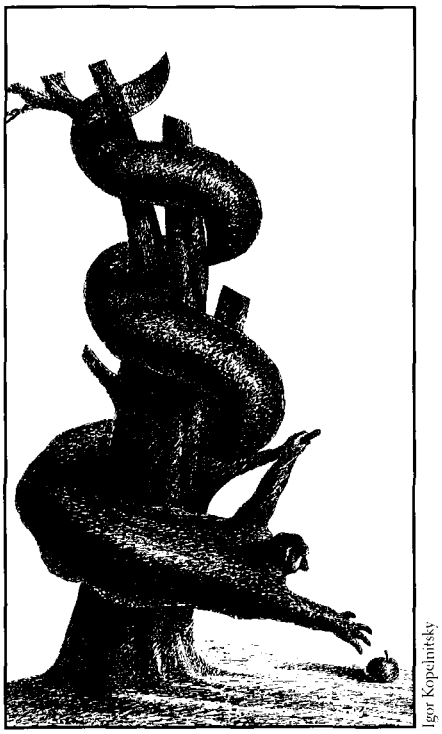
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"Disobedience in the eyes of any one who has read history is man's original virtue."

—Oscar Wilde

Coming Out Conservative: An Autobiography
by Marvin Liebman
San Francisco: Chronicle Books;
272 pp., $19.95

The First Dissident: The Book of Job in Today's Politics
by William Safire
New York: Random House;
336 pp., $23.00



Igor Kopelnitsky

The Republican Party Convention in Houston last summer verged on a gigantic symposium convened to discuss "The Religious Roots of the American Political System." Conservatives—so the Republicans claim and their enemies charge—are inspired by religious convictions, which determine their political beliefs and help to fix their public agenda. While fierce bigotry is supposed to make them heartless defenders of the status quo, gentle progressives, their opponents, can take comfort from recently published books by two veteran "libertarian conservatives."

Marvin Liebman is a political activist of long standing who helped to found Young Americans for Freedom, the American Conservative Union, and the Committee of One Million, which spent 20 years keeping the People's Republic of China out of the United Nations. Twelve years ago, this second-generation American Jew who in his youth had been a proud member of the Young Communist League was received into the Roman Catholic Church, an event that might have provided the thematic center and climax of his autobiography. Instead another event, following a decade after, takes precedence: the author's conversion to the religion of ideological sodomy, whose rituals are candidly and graphically described in *Coming Out Conservative*. (Chronicle Books of San Francisco claims no affiliation with *Chronicles* magazine of Rockford.) Now in his late 60's, Liebman appears to have lost interest in conservative politics, gay rights and homosexual narcissism alone being "meaningful" to him, "a home where I could be me."

His decision to inform William F. Buckley, Jr.—his closest friend for 35 years—of his homosexuality was, Liebman writes, only slightly more difficult than making his confession of the True Faith to Buckley had been. But by the spring of 1990, "when bigotry publicly came out of its closet again, I felt like a Jew in Germany in 1934 who had chosen to remain silent, hoping to be able to stay invisible as he watched the beginning of the Holocaust." Marvin Liebman (is the name one of God's little jokes, ordained from all eternity?), outraged by the manipulation of the Mapplethorpe exhibit by the "New Bigots" to "promote fear and hatred of lesbian and gay Americans" in the name of "traditional American (white Christian) family values," feared that "there would be no stop to the bigotry and hatred that would sweep America" and decided to take action. He wrote a long letter to Buckley and faxed it with the request that it be printed in *National Review*. The letter confessed its author's proud homosexuality and said in part,

> Anti-Semitism is something that, happily for the history of the last three decades, *National Review* helped to banish at least from the public behavior of conservatives. *National Review* lifted conservatism to a more enlightened plane, away from a tendency to engage in the manipulation of base motives, prejudices, and desires; activity in my view which tended to be a major base of conservatism's natural constituency back then. Political gay bashing, racism, and anti-Semitism . . . are waiting to be let out once again. I worry that the right wing . . . will return to the fever swamps.

If Liebman experienced anguish from the spectacle of his recently discovered Savior immersed in a bottle of Serrano's urine, he never mentions it.

Marvin Liebman believes that his open letter to Bill Buckley accomplished the end of his lifelong "double life," when he globe-trotted from one head of

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state to another by day and cruised the international meat racks by night. In fact, as a practicing Catholic who is also an active homosexual, and a conservative who has spent the last 11 years working for the federal bureaucracy, he is perpetuating it. In the role of gay activist, he makes even greater hash of Catholic moral theology than he does of conservative thought and politics.

Pathetically, Liebman sought the Church out of an overwhelming need to feel loved; tragically, having once experienced the divine charity, he convinced himself that the "Lord . . . accepted me as I was . . . a naked child before Him, a gay child." Liebman adds, "Unfortunately (or fortunately for my conversion) I never learned all the dogmas other than faith. Certainly, I was not really aware of the church's deep aversion to the practice of homosexuality. If I had realized it then, I might have had some second thoughts." Second thoughts came later—not in the form of doubt but of blithe asseveration, as on the subjects of hierarchy and authority: "From the time I quit the Communist Party, I have been a firm believer in the importance of the individual over any state, political party or religious hierarchy. . . . '[D]o your own thing' so long as you don't hurt anybody else." People—including fellow Catholics and conservatives—who disagree with him are simply dangerous bigots. "The threat to America no longer comes from the U. S. S. R. It comes again from within, from organizations that advocate racism and sexism and preach discrimination against Jews, blacks, Mexicans, Asians, and homosexuals. Their bigotry is growing along with hatred and fear of anything different." For a gentler, kinder America, substitute Marvin Liebman for Pat Buchanan at the Republican National Convention in 1996.

On the day of Liebman's baptism in St. Patrick Cathedral in New York City, "Pat [Buckley], tall and resplendent in her fur, waited outside the baptistry. A woman came up to her and plucked at her sleeve. 'Oh, madam,' she said, 'they baptize such beautiful babies here at St. Patrick's.' Pat looked down at her with her special look and said, 'Madam, wait 'til you get a load of this one.'"

In *The First Dissident*, William Safire tries to account for the fascination that the Book of Job has held for artists and intellectuals in the 19th and 20th centuries. Safire, a former Republican speechwriter and publicist and (for the past 20 years) a columnist for the *New York Times*, is, in spite of his reputation as a self-described "language maven" (a reputation, by the way, not substantiated by this book), essentially a political animal who turns in Temple, no matter what the day's reading, to Job for his private enjoyment. Although the Book of Job has for millennia been interpreted as an exhortation to patience and piety in the face of tribulation, Safire rejects what he calls a "numbing misreading." Job, he insists, is about "power-sharing": this "sore thumb sticking out of the Bible" is actually a dissertation on man's right to take to task a frequently unjust God by demanding justice of Him, while acquiescing in the "tension" between good and evil that maintains the world in existence. In his role as "theopolitician," Safire explains: "The struggle to understand the creator's obligation to command and his creator's power to obey, we call theology; the unendable contest for control between Authority and Subject, we call politics. The common denominator of these joint ventures in governance is power." To the question "Does man have a right to challenge God, and thus a divinely inspired right to confront any authority?" Safire gives an unqualified "yes."

A first objection to a political reading of Job is that it does indeed raise the text up like a sore thumb from the Old and the New Testaments, whose thematic development is otherwise cumulatively repetitive. If the message of Job really is political, why is this theme not taken up elsewhere in Scripture but confined solely to the Book of Job? A second is that Safire's interpretation rests on a literal acceptance of the poet's anthropomorphic portrait of God, a deity Who is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, lacks infinite goodness, and is as much in need of His worshiper as the worshiper is of Him. (It is not Fundamentalism that is dangerous to religious understanding; it is Literalism.) Anthropomorphism, in fact, is *The First Dissident*'s primary weakness, since Safire's "power poles" (as the author might term them) are not the Divine vs. Man but Superman vs. Man, allowing Safire the absurd equation of God with the Soviet court of law that tried Anatoly Shcharansky for treason.

Safire's God is the raging Patriarch of the Old Testament, and it is pointless in these circumstances to argue for the New Testament reading that is the only interpretation to link the Book of Job with the rest of the Bible. (Safire argues that the text of Job has been bowdlerized by scribes, Jewish and Christian, over the last two-and-a-half millennia in order to make the Uzite's challenge seem less blasphemous. The answer to this is that scribes and bowdlerizers are as open to supernatural inspiration as are original authors.) For the Christian reader, Elihu—the young man who interrupts the debate between Job and his "consolers" Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar to insist that suffering is not a sign of sinfulness but a means of purification—is a prefiguration of the New Covenant and of the Intercessor whom Job seeks to plead in his behalf before God. According to this reading, the message of the Book of Job is that God's justice is not man's justice *unless the Redeemer agrees to make it so*. Unfortunately for Safire's thesis, God makes no political prescriptions and the Bible offers none. Christ Himself had nothing to say about politics beyond the famous remark that men should render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and went obediently and patiently to His death as it was demanded by the Sanhedrin and ordered

by the Roman Procurator. Although Safire believes that "the great political questions of our age are Joban ones" and credits the defiance of the refuseniks with the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union, it seems plain that, with its demand for justice in this world, his is a distinctively Jewish understanding of history that may nevertheless have become a majoritarian view in the West, even among many Christians—and ex-Christians.

In the penultimate chapter of his book, William Safire discusses a number of what he considers to be contemporary Joban figures: Shcharansky, Menachem Begin, Andrei Sakharov, the Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng, Vaclav Havel, "Dr." Martin Luther King, Jr. No mention anywhere of Marvin Liebman. c

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A Clearing in the Wilderness

by Jeffrey A. Tucker

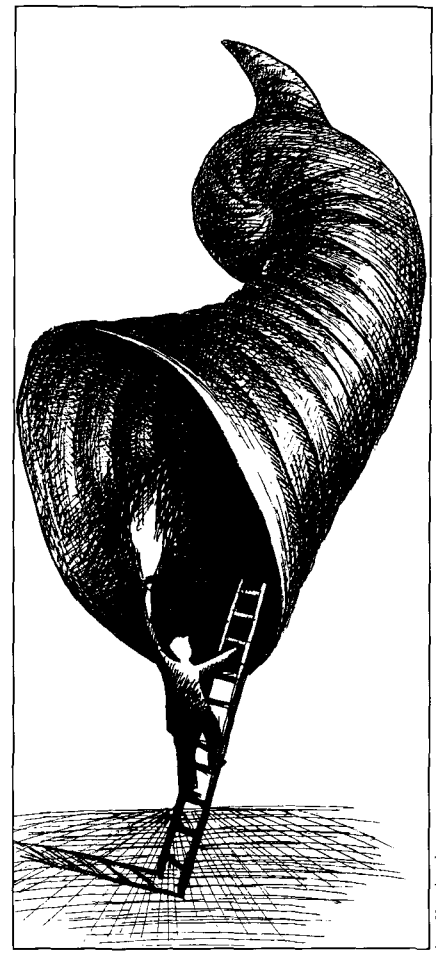
"After all, money, as they say, is miraculous."
—Thomas Carlyle

Austrian Economics: A Reader
Edited by Richard M. Ebeling
Hillsdale, Michigan: Hillsdale College Press; 692 pp., $19.95

Austrian Economics: Perspectives on the Past and Prospects for the Future
Edited by Richard M. Ebeling
Hillsdale, Michigan: Hillsdale College Press; 516 pp., $19.95

The economics profession, like many other branches of the social sciences, long ago had to decide whether to adopt positivist methods, as if its objects of study were organisms of constant and predictable motion, or to account for the infinite variety in human affairs by building a theory of the patterns of human action. We know which direction it chose: it attempted to pass itself off as a physical science, a fact we are reminded of every October when the Nobel Prize committee rewards an economist for some path-breaking scientific discovery, alongside great physicists and biologists. It is all but entirely forgotten that "the economy" is simply the composite choices of real human beings acting to improve their lot, which is not always defined by their bank accounts.

The branch of economics called the Austrian School, founded 120 years ago but having roots in late-Scholastic economic thought, chose a different path and as a result has been shunned by the dominant members of the profession for decades. The school has also sheltered this century's primary opponents of socialism and champions of free markets, many of whom have been heroes to the old American Right, including Carl Menger, Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, Ludwig von Mises, F. A. Hayek, Henry Hazlitt, Wilhelm Roepke, and a series of modern Austrian economists, including



Igor Kopelnitsky

Israel M. Kirzner and Murray N. Rothbard.

The connection between humane methodology and free markets is not incidental. The number-crunching economist is an essential player in the modern project to manage the economy as if it were a hydraulic machine. This machine has three primary levers—fiscal policy, monetary policy, and regulatory policy—and an endless number of secondary levers. And the mathematical models that dominate the profession—whether Keynesian, monetarist, or supply side—assume sectors of the economy to be homogeneous units subject to scientific control—ignoring who is being controlled and for what ends. Economists are sympathetic to varying degrees of economic planning for the same reason that foreign policy experts like globalist ideology: without it, the value of their opinions and services would be greatly diminished. No matter that the attempt to fulfill the macromanagerial project has been an abysmal failure, as have economists' attempts to predict the future with precision.

The Austrian School offers an entirely different program. It constructs a deductive theory of economic laws that both applies universally and attempts to account for heterogeneity in consumer preferences, material resources, labor skills, and time horizons. It makes a sharp distinction between *theoretical* economics, which requires no accumulation of data, and history. Conflating the two can be dangerous, as when in the 1970's economists assumed that a pattern showing an inverse relationship between unemployment and inflation was an economic law, though in fact it was only a historical contingency. This flawed assumption led policymakers to pull their levers to create a stagflation consisting of both high inflation and high unemployment. For the Austrian School, constructing an economic theory from data is akin to constructing a system of morals from the experience of one generation.

The school's prominence has ebbed and flowed since its founding 120 years ago with a smashing economic treatise by Carl Menger (*Principles of Economics*) showing that Adam Smith's theory of economic value (also Marx's) was fatally flawed. Economic value, Menger said, is determined by individual preferences, unique to each person, and not by how much work is used to produce goods. His book, still pleasurable to read, played a role in revolutionizing economic thinking. But his school fell into near obscurity with the Great Depression, which seemed to discredit market theory and bolstered the idea that central planning should be the way of the future.

The Austrian School gained new adherents when a Nobel Prize committee recognized Hayek's argument that central banking creates business cycles by

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manipulating interest rates. But it has taken the collapse of socialism to make the names and ideas of Menger and his followers (Mises most prominently) widely recognized. Austrian economics now finds itself in a boom phase, from having been almost alone in predicting the abysmal consequences of central economic planning and collectively owned property. The intellectual edifice it built to counter socialism, explaining the workings of the market economy and the results of tampering with its operations, makes it profoundly relevant in the postsocialist epoch.

Today economists sympathetic to the Austrian School span the globe, and they are quietly infiltrating economics departments long dominated by variants of Keynesian ideology. If the trend continues, this decade will see a renaissance of the Austrian tradition. We will know it has occurred when the writers of history-of-thought texts are forced to see the tradition as living on beyond the late 19th century and even offering an alternative paradigm to today's mainstream economic opinion.

Of the thousands of articles and books in this tradition, what single work offers a comprehensive introduction? Remarkably such a volume did not exist until now, which is why the volume edited by Professor Richard Ebeling of Hillsdale College is a landmark. It is simply and appropriately titled *Austrian Economics: A Reader*; in putting it together, Professor Ebeling made a series of inspired decisions. A similar volume about the Keynesian School would lead the reader into a miasma, a world clouded by contradictions, confused interpretations, recurring retractions. But the preoccupations of Austrian School tradition are soundly demonstrated here: methodological individualism, the market as an instrument of economic coordination and social cooperation, and state intervention as a source of economic chaos.

From Menger to modern theorists like Rothbard and Roger Garrison, and including the many in between, this book collects some of the school's most important essays. The first sections flesh out the philosophical foundation of the school, with contributions by Ludwig Lachmann (carving out a special place for the school), Ebeling (contributing two bibliographic essays), Rothbard (defending the "logic of action" or praxeology), Hayek (arguing for the centrality of individual decision-making), Mises (distinguishing social from natural science), Leland B. Yeager (casting doubt on the postulate that science means collecting numbers), Menger (theorizing about the sources of social evolution), and Mario Rizzo (hitting so-called econometrics as riddled with fallacy).

The section arguing against macroeconomic management, showing how the market serves its own coordinative function, highlights the writings of Hayek and Mises, along with F. C. Pasour's ideas on subjectivism and cost, and includes a piece on the role of entrepreneurship by Kirzner. The section on capital and interest—which centers on the issue of the passage of time—brings the forgotten work of Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (a finance minister in the Austrian government) into the forefront with an essay he wrote in 1901 and demonstrates what an excellent theorist and writer he was. Through patient deduction, he explains the way time factors into the production process creating distinctions among types of goods, how long it takes to create them, and the extent to which they are desired on the market. He predicts that by effectively abolishing the structure of production, socialism will make "a relatively small amount of consumption goods available for the nation's population." Ebeling also includes a fascinating rebuttal by proto-Keynesian L. G. Bostedo, arguing against the importance of savings, and a response by Böhm-Bawerk.

Austrian capital theory also encompasses the controversial (within economics) idea that interest rates (earned and paid) are determined by "time preference," the idea that people always prefer goods sooner rather than later but in different degrees. Both Rothbard and Vernon A. Mund bolster the case, along with an article by Kirzner on Mises' capital and interest theory.

Menger's argument that money itself originates in the market—not with the government or a social compact—is included here, along with Mises' theory of the business cycle. Though hysterically attacked as reactionary by both monetarists and Keynesians, Misesian cycle-theory tells a story of central banks skewing investment decisions by manipulating interest rates. The last section, once again resting on two contributions by Mises, brings the reader to issues of public policy and to the importance of legal institutions, which protect property and the private economy from invasion.

For those wanting a look at the kinds of issues that modern Austrian economists are working with, the book's companion volume—*Austrian Economics: Perspectives on the Past and Prospects for the Future*—is a great place to start. Twenty-three contributors cover a range of topics. Some notable contributions include: Hans-Hermann Hoppe's methodological *tour de force* touching on ethics; Peter Boettke's explanation of why Soviet socialism failed for reasons more fundamental than the West's military buildup; Jack High's linkage of the emergence of the regulatory state with the habit of viewing the market as an entity frozen in time, rather than as a continuing process; and Roger Garrison's argument that Keynesians and monetarists are more alike than is conventionally supposed. Each paper has two appended commentaries, and none shrinks before rigorous criticism.

Before the turn of the century, Menger gave up economics and politics because he feared that nothing could be done to stop the onslaught of war, socialism, and the managerial state. Were he alive today, he might argue that his pessimism was justified, but he would be proud to see that his own school has held to first principles, resisting the temptation to join the legions of would-be state managers who call themselves economists today. C

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Watergate: The Continuing Story

by James Hill

Nixon: Ruin and Recovery 1973-1990
by Stephen E. Ambrose
New York: Simon & Schuster;
667 pp., $27.50

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One of the problems with treating an event like Watergate as history is that, for most of us, it isn't. The "third-rate" burglary that became a constitutional crisis leading to the only resignation of a sitting President in our history may be two decades old, but it is still very much with us.

In last fall's campaign, we saw just how much. Bill Clinton hammered away at George Bush for his handling of the economy, but Democrats in Congress, hedging their bets even as their man took a phenomenal lead in the polls, started preparing for the possibility of a second Bush presidency by looking for skeletons in Mr. Bush's closet. Thus we had "Irangate" and "Iraqgate"—two somewhat related attempts to tie the President to arms-for-hostage swaps during the Reagan administration and to charge him with coddling Saddam Hussein in the time leading up to the Iraqi dictator's invasion of Kuwait.

The politics of the matter should have been obvious: Congress was positioning Mr. Bush for a legislative mugging during a second term. Those shrill charges of a "cover-up" and hyperbolic claims of a "smoking gun" may have sounded like nonsense in the heat of a campaign, but they were really shots across Mr. Bush's bow. The message was clear: win, and we will hound you unmercifully using the full force of the law through four more years. (One is tempted, in fact, to ask whether this was the reason George Bush ran such a horrible campaign.)

Congress got even more than it bargained for when Richard Nixon resigned in that long-ago summer of 1974: it got statutory control of the presidency. Once it had it, along with the court-ordered power to perpetuate Democratic control of the legislature through the decennial process of shifting legislative districts (thus assuring incumbents of something akin to academic tenure), it had a lock-hard grip on our democracy. All this has largely been lost on the press (which still thinks it had a collective role in Watergate) and other institutions that monitor government, although the term-limit juggernaut seems to indicate that the people are at least aware of what is going on.

But more on this later. Getting back to Watergate as history, we see that, even though the event is still so much a part of our present, there is no mistaking that it is also a part of our past. Many of its key figures have faded into obscurity; some, including Sam Ervin, John Sirica, and John Mitchell, are dead. The one person who is still very much with us is Richard M. Nixon. One of the most complex men ever to hold the presidency, he seems even more complex in his long exile. Nixon has enjoyed the triumph so well expressed on automobile bumper-stickers—"Live long enough to be a nuisance to your kids"—but his "kids," the American people he so wanted to govern paternalistically after they returned him to the White House with one of the largest landslides in American history, still know little about him.

Stephen E. Ambrose, wrapping up his multivolume biography of the 37th President with *Ruin and Recovery*, attempts to close this gap, but mostly fails. Professor Ambrose, who admits that he began his project with hostility toward Nixon, largely fails to present the warmer, wiser man that he has grown to admire: the elder statesman who can still get an audience with foreign leaders, offer his advice to Presidents (even if they don't take it), and produce thoughtful books on the American condition.

The failure may not be entirely Professor Ambrose's fault. That he presents precious little about Nixon's recovery may be due in part to the former President's lust for privacy and to his determination to write his own record rather than defer to others. Nevertheless, we must go through 400 pages before we start to read about Nixon in exile, and much of this information is familiar to those who have followed the President's career.

The other problem, of course, is Watergate itself, by far the defining and all-consuming event of Richard Nixon's long and largely productive life. But Watergate is even more familiar to readers than Nixon's trips to China. By reason of the nature of the crisis, the tapes, and the number of books written by Watergate participants, Americans have a very thorough picture, although possibly not an understanding, of Nixon's day-by-day free-fall into disgrace. It may still be necessary for the biographer to cover this ground, but the amount of attention Ambrose devotes to it seems excessive.

But enough of this. Stephen Ambrose has, perhaps unwittingly, identified a sea change in American politics, and that is the takeover of the presidency that Congress achieved with Watergate. It is preposterous to think anybody's presidency can function in the straitjacket with which Congress has tried to contain it. Yet our obsession with the concept of America as a nation of laws has made us generally blind to this reality. While I have no sympathy for Richard Nixon and find it impossible to excuse the lawless behavior that produced such a simpleton break-in and imbecilic cover-up, it seems clear to me that we must eventually understand that Watergate did not make things better—

LIBERAL ARTS

PITY PATER

The Indiana Court of Appeals recently reversed a lower court order requiring an unemployed father who was delinquent with his child-support payments to stand on the county courthouse lawn holding a sign reading "Need Job to Support Children." According to the *Tennessean* last November, the appeals court argued that the lower court's ruling was unreasonable and inappropriate because it would have exposed the father, one Clarence William Epley III, to public humiliation. The man has since found a job.

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that, indeed, an argument can be made that Watergate most certainly made them worse.

While it is Republican Presidents who have come under the scrutiny of investigations, committee hearings, and special prosecutions searching for impeachable offenses, it is perhaps the Democrats (more specifically, Jimmy Carter; honeymooning Bill Clinton doesn't yet count) since Watergate who have paid the greatest price for this congressional coup. As Professor Ambrose points out, while being run up a tree by Watergate Nixon offered welfare reform, campaign reform, universal health insurance, *détente* with the Soviets (thank God we didn't get that), and peace in the Middle East. Congress still wouldn't call off the dogs. In his epilogue, Professor Ambrose notes what we could have had had Nixon not resigned, and he offers the thought that, as a direct result of the resignation, we got Ronald Reagan a few years down the road and a much more conservative political climate instead. Ambrose misses the point. It was not until the first term of the Reagan presidency that the executive branch reachieved self-governance. It didn't last, as Iran-Contra—a very dubious inquisition into presidential "law-breaking"—was to prove in the second term. Meanwhile, a post-Watergate, "reformed" Congress expanded its privileges, raised its wages, and lined its pockets with huge contributions from political action committees. If Congress saw no incentive in making a deal with Richard Nixon to cure the nation's ills in return for forgiving—or at least forgetting—Watergate, then what in the world would lead one to suppose that Congress would give in to a less vulnerable—even Democratic—President, under whom it could feed even more off special interests and maintain gridlock?

This is the continuing story of Watergate, of why it is so difficult—even with a Democratic administration coming to power—to view it as history. As for Richard Nixon, the enigma remains. One hopes that Roger Morris, another Nixon biographer, will give us in future volumes more insight about the man and less inside baseball about the scandal that wrecked not only his presidency but perhaps our separation of powers as well.

James Hill is editor of the Perspective section of the Arizona Republic.

Golden Days of Yore

by H.W. Crocker III

The Reporter Who Would Be King: A Biography of Richard Harding Davis
by Arthur Lubow
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 438 pp., $25.00

Richard Harding Davis exemplified the all-American ideal of Anglo-Saxon manhood—a chivalrous adventurer of spotless character and intentions, sporting, always in favor of the underdog, not too intellectual, and never without a clean starched shirt and a portable bathtub, no matter where his career as an intrepid reporter and war correspondent might take him.

At the turn of the century he was the most celebrated war correspondent in the country. He was also a successful short-story writer, novelist, and playwright, as well as the square-jawed male counterpart to the Gibson Girl. As a star reporter he crafted rather creative crime stories, was on the scene at the Johnstown flood, immortalized Teddy Roosevelt's charge up San Juan (actually Kettle) Hill and was captured and nearly sentenced to death by the Germans at the start of the First World War.

David also covered the Boer War—a war that brought out much of his character in fine form. Though Davis had many English friends and idealized the English country gentleman, he sided with the Boers. Not only were they the underdog, but, as his biographer points out, Davis saw the war "as a clash of cultures, and characteristically, he favored the old-fashioned and picturesque over the brutally modern." The war also touched his sense of chivalry. Though this might not shock our coarser natures today, Davis believed, "It is not becoming that the British army should fight against women even if they are good shots." Of course, Davis had never met our old bore Patricia Schroeder.

Nevertheless, the all-American boy and his close-knit family had their share of woe. Davis never consummated his marriage with his first wife, who, the author hints heavily, was a lesbian, and his second wife was insecure and jealous. Davis's sister, who was a close friend of his first wife, married a homosexual Anglican priest, and Davis's brother, to whom he was devoted, died without issue. Davis himself fathered one daughter, but he died before she was two years old.

We honor and remember some of Davis's contemporaries—like Frederic Remington and Stephen Crane—while neglecting the golden boy of war correspondents, at least in part because we no longer share his all-American ideals. Indeed, those ideals were coming under attack even in the twilight hours of his own day. As one satirist mocked him in 1915, the year before Davis's death: "A perfect day, for Mr. Davis, would consist of a morning's danger, taken as a matter of course; in the afternoon a little chivalry, equally a matter-of-course to a well-bred man; then a motor dash from hardship to some great city, a bath, a perfect dinner nobly planned. Shrapnel, chivalry, *sauce mousseline*, and so to work the next morning. . . . Richard Coeur-de-Lion would not have disliked such a day, once he was used to the shrapnel." But the satirist continues on: "Have you never, although you may be rather chivalrous yourself, in a modest way, risen from the perusal of Mr. Davis on chivalry with a determination never again, no matter how infirm the woman standing in front of you might be, or how heavy-laden, to rise from your seat in the car for her sake?" Well, if you have, you're a cad. But then again, that's what we're supposed to be nowadays, aren't we? James Dean, Jack Nicholson, Axl Rose—need one say more?

Almost everything about Davis cuts against the grain of modern insensibility—not just his chaste, knightly ideals, but his lack of prudery about tobacco. Not only did he campaign repeatedly for more tobacco supplies for hard-pressed servicemen (he thought tobacco shortages were no small hardship), but tobacco was the point of one of his most moving passages about the Boer War. At the relief of Ladysmith, Davis came across two drawn, tired, but stiff upper-lipped English officers of the sort he still admired even while cheering on the Boers. He gave them each a cigar. "They lit the cigars and at the first taste of the smoke—and they were not good cigars—an almost inhuman expression of peace and good-will and utter abandonment to joy spread over their yellow skins and cracked lips and fever-lit eyes. The first man dropped his reins and put his hands on his hips and threw back his

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head and shoulders and closed his eyelids. I felt that I had intruded at a moment which should have been kept sacred." An ad-writer for J. R. Reynolds couldn't have put it better.

Arthur Lubow correctly sums up Richard Harding Davis's place in American literary history by saying, "Had his legend been tarnished by sexual scandal or neurotic eccentricity, it would have shown brighter in the modern world. Instead, it quickly gathered dust, like an Eastlake chair in grandmother's parlor. His hearty, boyish optimism clashed irreconcilably with the furnishings of the modern mind." Though Lubow looks like a young fellow himself, he has done Richard Harding Davis a grand and memorable service in this fast-paced, gracefully crafted, and continually entertaining record of a hero of the ephemeral trade of journalism and its evanescent celebrity.

H.W. Crocker III is deputy director for writing and research for Governor Pete Wilson of California.

What Is to Be Done?

by William Baer

Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War Against Traditional Values
by Michael Medved
New York: HarperCollins; 288 pp., $20.00

◆

"The first thing I did when I became president of the Motion Picture Association of America was to junk the Hays Production Code." Jack Valenti eliminated the Hays Production Code in 1966—when the average weekly motion-picture audience in the United States was 38 million people. The very next year, with the "moral strictures" of the old code gone and the infectious "new" ideas of the counterculture seeping into Hollywood, the weekly average fell to 17 million. Less than half. It was the most astonishing one-year decline in motion-picture history.

And the industry has never recovered its lost audience. As recently as 1991, the weekly average was still only 18 million (and any seemingly impressive box-office receipts are really the result of a ticket-price inflation of nearly 70 percent over the past ten years). What happened? *Everyone* knows what happened, but three-time Oscar winner Frank Capra, who retired in disgust from the business in the late 60's, describes it with gusto in his autobiography *The Name Above the Title* (1971):

> The winds of change blew through the dream factories of make-believe. . . . The hedonists, the homosexuals, the hemophilic bleeding hearts, the God-haters, the quick-buck artists who substituted shock for talent, all cried: "Shake 'em! Rattle 'em! God is dead. . . . Shock! To hell with the good in man. Dredge up his evil—shock! Shock!"

And yet, amazing as it seems, things have actually gotten far worse than they were in the late 1960's.

In his excellent and courageous new book, *Hollywood vs. America*, Michael Medved, co-host of PBS's *Sneak Previews*, analyzes both the extent of the problem and the reason why things went wrong. Regarding the latter, he describes the core of the industry as a small community of insecure professionals who want, more than anything else, to be "taken seriously" and considered as "artists." Generally uninformed about the arts, they eagerly bought into the 60's revival of that old, simpleminded, and quite boring Jacobin notion that the "real" artist continually shocks and irritates the bourgeoisie. This led to a natural antipathy and arrogance toward the ideals of middle-class America—their potential audience.

For example, in his chapter entitled "The Glorification of Ugliness," Medved discusses Hollywood's most recent obsessions: cannibalism (at least 11 films in the past four years), urine (17 recent examples), and vomit (one could even compare the vomiting techniques of Meryl Streep, Sissy Spacek, and Faye Dunaway). Medved also prepares his readers for the forthcoming big-budget film *Sacred Cows*, in which the President of the United States somehow has sex with a barnyard bovine.

More fundamental aspects of the problem that are analyzed by Medved, with both depth and countless examples, are Hollywood's relentless assaults on religion and the traditional family, its exaltation of promiscuity (and even illegitimacy), its addiction to violence and obscenity, its antipathy to heroes, and its constant bashing of the United States. Concerning this last issue, Medved writes of the absurdly revisionist *Dances with Wolves*: "By converting these Sioux Indians into gentle, vaguely pacifist, environmentally responsible bucolics, Kevin Costner, in a state of holy empty-headedness, has falsified history as much as any time-serving Stalinist of the Red Decade."

The motion-picture industry, of course, defiantly rejects such criticism. Everything it does is either a "reflection" of society (an argument that Medved effectively demolishes) or simply a form of entertainment with no real impact on its viewers. Thus the same people who relentlessly drop gratuitous environmental "messages" into their films in order to "save the earth" will, at the same time, deny that *The Deer Hunter*'s premier on national television had anything to do with the 26 people who, in subsequent weeks, killed themselves playing Russian roulette. Medved is particularly effective in destroying the lingering myth that "no one really knows" whether film and television violence affects the viewing audience. As he discusses in detail, "more than three thousand research projects and scientific studies between 1960 and 1992 have confirmed the correlation between a steady diet of violent entertainment and aggressive and antisocial behavior."

So what can be done? Michael Medved doesn't believe that either federal censorship or a resurrected production code would work in today's diversified Hollywood. He does feel that boycotts and lobbying groups can be particularly effective. And he also believes that "movieland missionaries" of traditional Christian or Jewish beliefs can greatly affect the industry by offering a viable and fulfilling response to "the spiritual hunger" of many Hollywood professionals—a "hunger" that is frequently wasted on Scientology, Shirley MacLaine-type idiocy, or the latest industry fad: Marianne Williamson's "Course in Miracles."

William Baer is editor of the Formalist *and writes from Evansville, Indiana.*

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The Recovery of the West

by Michael Lee Kelly

A Historian and His World: A Life of Christopher Dawson
by Christina Scott
New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers; 272 pp., $34.95

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There are dangers in a daughter writing her father's biography: the danger that she will be too uncritical if her relationship with him were close and affectionate; or, as is more common these days, that she will be too critical if it were not. Similarly, she may rely too much on her own reminiscences or otherwise insinuate herself into her pages. Christina Scott has done a superb job of steering a clear course, and though her biography of her father, Christopher Dawson, could have been better, it could not have been much better.

Mrs. Scott has a sound sense for the telling detail. She knows that the principles revealed in Henry James' rhetorical questions apply as much to the art of biography as to the art of fiction: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" She spends far less time in telling us what was her father's character than in showing us. This is as it should be.

Take, for instance, her inclusion in full of her father's reply to Christopher Hill's scathing review of *Dynamics of World History*:

> My attention has just been drawn to the article in your current issue by Christopher Hill on "The Church, Marx and History," in which he states that "the late Mr. Dawson was not a great historian."
>
> I do not wish to assert that I am "great" but I do most emphatically deny that I am "late," and I feel doubtful whether a writer who is unable to discover the truth in a contemporary matter of fact which is easily ascertainable is competent to survey the vast field which he has embraced in his article.
>
> It seems to me that there is no more sense in asking, like Mr. Hill, "What *is* the use of history" than in asking what is the use of memory. An individual who has lost his memory is a lost individual, and a society that has no history and historical consciousness is a barbarous society. It is as simple as that.

Mrs. Scott allows incident to illustrate the character of her father's associates as well, as when she writes about E. I. Watkins, Dawson's oldest and dearest friend, "who once submitted a manuscript which he had typed on a machine without a ribbon saying that if the printer held it up to the light he would be able to read it."

Dawson's work ranged from the origins of culture in prehistoric Europe and the ancient East to the rise of Europe in the Middle Ages, from the spirit of the Oxford Movement to the entrenchment of the modern totalitarian state, and Mrs. Scott has done an admirable job of summarizing it. She is also highly successful in situating her father's life within his intellectual milieu (hence the title of her book). In her preface we read, "To write the biography of one's father is a daunting enough task and it becomes even more so when as it happens he was a scholar who lived almost entirely in the mind." She handles this difficulty—so deftly that we never would have known of it had she not told us—by "treat[ing] his life as part of the social and religious history of the age in which he lived." And so we read of Dawson's fellow writers at the Catholic publishing firm of Sheed & Ward; of his participation in the *Covegno Volta*, where he was one of the few European delegates to realize "that this was no historical conference as they had been led to believe but a 'put-up job' by Mussolini's government"; and of his Vice-Presidency of the Sword of the Spirit, Cardinal Arthur Hinsley's ecumenical movement, which was squashed by anti-Protestant bigotry.

Mrs. Scott's biography was first published in 1984 by Sheed & Ward, and this reprint by Transaction Publishers as part of Russell Kirk's "Library of Conservative Thought" contains not only James Oliver's appreciation of Dawson as a historian of ideas, which appeared in the first edition, but a typically fine introduction written by Kirk for this reprint and a new appendix, "Memories of a Victorian Childhood," by Dawson himself. This last addition is especially welcome, autobiography complementing the biography that precedes it. In it we see the insight of a true conservative in search of historical meaning:

> Western man is being submitted to the same process which he inflicted on more primitive peoples in the last century. As the Red Indian and the South Sea Islander saw their world and their way of living destroyed by the rifle and the railway and the trader, and were left culturally naked in an alien world, so we too have seen our world destroyed and our culture liquidated under the pressure of anonymous forces and impersonal techniques, which we created with one side of our minds as instruments of our limited purposes, but which have become our masters. . . . But . . . we cannot dismiss the past as dead and unimportant. If it is dead, it deserves to be recorded, no less than any other vanished civilization. If it is not dead, but only in a state of revolutionary change, we must study the past in order to discover what elements in its tradition can be recovered, what is lost beyond recall and what is indispensable to the continuity and the identity of Western culture.

What Dawson in his study of the past found to be indispensable to the continuity and identity of Western culture, indeed of all cultures, is that, in his daughter's words, "every civilization [must recognize] the existence of a higher spiritual order that [is] above conflicting individual interests or the collective interests of the state." As he himself put it in *Religion and the Modern State*, a work that should be read by every conservative, "Civilization is a road by which man travels, not a house for him to dwell in. His true city is elsewhere."

This overarching theme of all of Dawson's work is well communicated by Mrs. Scott. Nonetheless, we here find her book's one real weakness. Even though she has summarized her father's writings well, we are left wanting a broader, deeper analysis. To be fair, she did set out to write his biography and

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not a study of his work; yet, to a great extent, her father's life was his work. To write a completely satisfying biography of Christopher Dawson, one must present a more satisfying look at his *oeuvre*. What Mrs. Scott gives us is certainly adequate, as far as it goes. One simply wishes she had gone further. It is a tribute to Dawson that we would like to see his work discussed more fully; it is an even greater one to Mrs. Scott that she is the one we would like to see do it.

Michael Lee Kelly recently earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Gloomy Waters

by Gregory McNamee

Properties of Blood
by William Mills
Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press; 112 pp., $19.95

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Rivers exercise a strange pull on the human imagination; they work their way into every art form, from Bernini's Renaissance sculptures of the great flows of Europe to Mikhail Sholokhov's social-realist novels of Cossack life along the Don to Basho's haiku celebrating the waterways of northern Japan. In this country no region has taken to rivers quite like the South: there is scarcely a Southern novel or song in which the Mississippi or the Atchafalaya or the Sewanee or some other flood does not figure somehow.

William Mills' *Properties of Blood*, a book of short stories that are set in the central-southern states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana, continues the tradition. Its characters have dark waterways at their shoulders; their conversations are punctuated by ripples and the ker-plunking of errant frogs; their days are marked by fishing trips and cold beers under bankside groves. *Properties of Blood* continues another tradition, too: the unremitting gloominess for which so much Southern writing is known.

Mills' people are alternately professors, medical professionals, and what it is now politically incorrect to term white-trash types with no visible means of support. All his women have large breasts (the one fixation Mills exhibits in this collection, the narration of which is largely neutral in tone and vastly more bookish and intellectual than his characters themselves), many of them wear stretch pants and bouffant hairdos, and they maybe possess a high school diploma between every two or three of them. Just about all, male or female, well-heeled or dirt-poor, are downright miserable.

How could they not yield gloom? But for all that, Mills knows how to tell a story. The collection's opening, "Sweet Tickfaw Run Softly, Till I End My Song," is an effective gaze into the emotional abyss of divorce and the subsequent adjustment of altering old habits to the rhythms of new partners, of raising children that are not one's own, of averting the curious questions of family and friends. Mills' words are well chosen and full of reference, even if they sometimes peek into corners that aren't open to view in polite company: "Though Carlisle had no children, he thought he understood Lot's difficulties with his daughters. Like most men, as he had gotten older he had to account for his lust for girls who had not yet crossed the Greenwich Mean Line of Womanhood." Although in this and other stories Mills tends to stack epigrammatic sentences one atop the other like loose boards, he surely holds your attention.

This is a book that admits little of the existence of cities, and thus a pleasant rural departure from the usual run of claustrophobic cosmopolitanism found in so many collections of short fiction. Mills' "Belle Slough" is one of the best hunting stories to have appeared in a long while, ranking near Hemingway, Tom McGuane, and Jim Harrison's best moments, perfectly evoking the feel of a Southern hardwood forest. In the religiously charged "An Imitation," Mills offers a superb (and nostalgia-inducing, for anyone who grew up in the South as I did) depiction of a Sunday dinner in Dixie, with its mounds of meats and fowl, five kinds of vegetables and as many pies, a "hummock of rice, and a quivering mound of cranberry jelly looking nervous before what was to come." At the end of the mouth-watering tale one doesn't even mind so much Mills' likening of the meal to a medieval Passion play, although the point is a little forced. "A Marquis" is a superb inquiry into unschooled avarice and crushed ambition as seen in the sorry life of a Cajun riverside restaurateur, as authentically rendered as a Walker Percy hero.

William Mills knows the territory whereof he writes; this is not the product of a transplanted Ivy Leaguer at Louisiana State, but of a homeboy. His stories resonate with the right detail, such as this spot-on description of the Mississippi Delta in wintertime: "In this flat country there were no wild mountains unchanged by the seasons, nor even ant snow to cover the dead ocherous land. What broke the dullness were the open sores of greasy-walled filling stations cluttered with piles of old tires and tubes and their ESSO signs that flapped in the February wind." Those stories are populated by real people in whose kitchens you can smell gumbo cooking, in whose voices you can hear the twang of the old Scottish lowlands, in whose lives you can sense the weight of history—and always the tug that the nearby rivers ceaselessly exert.

Gregory McNamee is the author of Christ on the Mount of Olives *(Broken Moon Press), a book of short stories.*

LIBERAL ARTS

INSENSITIVITY ON THE LEFT

Russ Feingold, a new United States senator from Wisconsin, "trades his wing-tips for golf spikes and takes to the links" once a year to host the Edmund Fitzgerald Golf Tournament, reported the *Milwaukee Journal* last November. The tournament, which aims to be the last of each golf season, takes its name from the tragic Lake Superior shipwreck of November 10, 1975. Wisconsin's recently elected ultra-liberal senator reportedly jokes annually about the disaster, which left 29 sailors dead and subsequently inspired the ballad by Gordon Lightfoot, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

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Letter From East Berlin

by Hamilton Beck

The New Kohlonization

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The euphoria that accompanied the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, should still be fresh in our minds. We remember the scenes of people dancing on the Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate, total strangers embracing each other, sharing bottles of champagne. We remember the party atmosphere that culminated in reunification in October 1990. Today I am writing to tell of the hangover that has followed the party.

"Hangover" is actually not the best word to describe what I saw in the eastern part of Berlin from February to July of 1992, because a hangover goes away over the course of time and the pain and frustration in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) have been getting worse, not better. If you have followed events in Germany since the Wall came down, you have probably heard sentences like: "Now that the actual physical Wall has come down, we have to break down the mental walls that still separate us." I want to suggest that the wall in the mind is growing higher instead of getting lower and that this wall is not just a mental phenomenon but has its basis in actuality. Consider this fact, trivial in itself but symptomatic: in 1991 about 100 women in West Berlin married men from Africa; only 46 married men from East Berlin.

East Berlin today presents a different appearance than it did the last time I was there two years ago. The very air in the East is different from what it used to be, as the characteristic GDR-stench put out by cars and trucks belching fumes is largely gone. So many streets are being renamed so quickly that maps soon become obsolete for East Berlin. Gone are *Lenin Boulevard* and *Ho Chi Minh Street* as well as numerous other streets named after prominent and not-so-prominent communists. Everywhere one sees shops that offer goods and services that earlier (in the German language of today, the word for "earlier" has come to be synonymous with "before reunification") were rare if not unknown: travel agencies, driving schools, laundromats, Turkish snack shops and expensive Chinese restaurants, video stores and sex shops. On the street corners people hawk newspapers, in the subways there are panhandlers, and everywhere Vietnamese and Polish vendors of black-market cigarettes. Soviet military uniforms and Socialist Unity Party (SED) insignia are for sale on the streets. Garbage containers are filled with perfectly usable furniture that has the one unforgivable flaw of clearly having been made in the GDR.

One also sees many stores selling locks and security devices, a testimony to the increase in burglary and car theft in the East since the Wall has opened. The once omnipresent police now seem just as scarce as in any Western city. One-third of the inhabitants of large cities in the East are afraid to go out on the streets alone in their own neighborhood, which is not only more than for comparable cities in West Germany but more than for New York and Chicago; less than 4 percent of these inhabitants consider themselves "very safe." The numbers were reversed before the Wall came down.

One sees many empty stores as well, victims of rising rents and the decrease in purchasing power of East Berlin consumers. Around the corner from where I lived was a small drugstore that had been run by a family for the last 13 years. Their going-out-of-business sale took place in August. A West German chain, Rossmann, is opening a huge store just down the street from them. This is the nature of competition, you might say. But competition should be the same for everyone, and West Berlin drugstore owners, knowing that they too could not survive against Rossmann, are protected by a special regulation that prevents it from opening any stores in West Berlin. Rossmann is moving into the East with more than thirty stores while it remains excluded from the West, just as though the Wall still separated the halves of the city. The owners of the drugstore around the corner, by the way, count themselves lucky. A Syrian who lives in West Berlin has bought the property and plans to turn it into an Italian restaurant. He has agreed to hire the former proprietors as waiters and waitresses.

At least they do not have to join the large and growing army of the unemployed. Over two-thirds of the work force is idle in some areas of East Germany. The inflation rate over the 12-month period ending last August was 12.9 percent in the East, 3.5 percent in the West. Sixty-nine percent of East Germans view the general economic situation in their part of the country as "bad" or "very bad," only 2 percent see it as "good" or "very good." With very little time for transition, the Easterners or "Ossies" have been thrown into the waters of capitalism, and telling them to learn how to swim, as many Westerners or "Wessies" do, is neither very helpful nor much appreciated by the Ossies. They can complain more loudly about the state than before; they have video cassette players, new furniture, and used Opel Cadets (having gone into debt in the process); and they are adjusting uneasily to a world in which money plays a much more important role than it ever did before. As one 13-year-old girl from the East put it, "For many people unification has meant up until now unemployment, Coca Cola, and McDonald's."

There is still a gap between incomes, so that the West attracts the best and most mobile members of the East German work force. Strangely enough, there has been much less difficulty equalizing rents. In fact, in some parts of East Berlin rents have not only gone up by more than 300 percent since reunification, some apartments in the East are now more expensive per square yard than comparable ones in West Berlin. When rents are increased to Western levels but wages are not, it is easy to see what the result will be: thousands of people in East Berlin will soon no longer be able to afford their apartments.

The fundamental economic problem lies in the question of property ownership. The courts are overwhelmed with cases handling claims that occasionally go back as far as the Weimar Republic,

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since some of the property expropriated by the GDR was previously expropriated by the Soviet occupiers and before that by the Nazis. With questions of ownership often up in the air, Western companies are reluctant to invest in the East, which has come to be seen as an area where Western companies can sell their used cars and discount items, not as a place where they should invest in new plants.

The responsibility for new investments rests largely with the so-called *Treuhand* or Trustee Commission, which is selling off the property of the former East German state to the private sector. Until recently, the *Treuhand* gave Western companies preference over Eastern buyers, even when the Western companies offered less. These companies regularly promise to retain most of the indigenous work force; they just as regularly ignore these promises. The current head of the *Treuhand* estimates that 20 to 30 percent of the jobs "guaranteed" by the new owners have simply been eliminated. And even the first head of the *Treuhand*, Detlev Rohwedder, complained that Western businessmen behaved "like colonial officers" in the East. Rohwedder has since been assassinated by a West German terrorist group, the Red Army Faction. The *Treuhand* sold one Eastern firm to a Western company for the price of one mark, about 70 cents. Even though this deal has since been revoked, resentment over it persists in the East. A joke circulating in East Berlin has the punchline: "The *Treuhand*, or: Can't we sell it to you for less?" No one laughs, however, at a statement uttered by a character in Rolf Hochhuth's latest play, *Wessies in Weimar*: "Whoever does what Rohwedder did shouldn't be surprised when he is shot to death."

Cultural and academic institutions, once heavily subsidized by the GDR, are facing hard times. Many theaters and orchestras are closed, while cynics note that money is somehow available to open as a museum part of what remains of Hitler's bunker. At the Humboldt University in East Berlin there used to be 11 professors of American Studies. Ten have been let go and replaced with professors from West Germany; the 11th is from the East but is two years away from retirement. His successor has already been named. He, of course, is from West Germany. The college of veterinary medicine at Humboldt was generally recognized as being superior to that at the Free University (FU) in West Berlin. It was originally decided that Humboldt would keep its department and the FU would close its. But the decision was later reversed by Berlin's city administration, whose head is a former president of the FU.

Ninety percent of women were employed in the former GDR; by March 1992, the percentage was down to just over 62 percent. Academic women over 30 are particularly disadvantaged when faced with the prospect of "retraining" or "learning a new skill." These phrases are all too often euphemisms for descending the social ladder, so that a woman with a degree in economics "retrains" to become a secretary and a woman with a Ph. D. in philosophy "continues her education" as a floral arranger. Today women who apply for jobs are asked what they plan to do if their children become ill. Earlier this was never a reason for being refused employment. There are unsubstantiated (but widely believed) rumors that young, childless women in the East are undergoing sterilization to increase their hiring chances. It is a fact that since reunification the birthrate in East Germany has been cut nearly in half.

The colonization of the East by the West is perhaps felt most intrusively in the little things of everyday life. A few examples: all the signs indicating right-turn-on-red are being taken down. The Wessies say because of safety concerns. The Ossies believe because it was their invention. Milk was collected from mothers in the GDR who had more than they needed and provided to mothers who did not produce enough of their own. The centers that collected this milk have been closed by order of West German health officials. Even West German doctors have objected to this decision. The environmental policy of the GDR was a catastrophe in most areas, but in one field East Germans were leaders: the collection of bottles for reuse. Most collection centers have been shut down and replaced by recycling centers. Even though recycling is less efficient than reuse, reuse was Eastern, and so it is gone.

Chancellor Kohl, who initially said that with reunification "no one would be worse off and many would be better off," now finds himself an object of derision in the East. Ossies no longer say they are being colonized, they say they are being "Kohl-onized." All but one of the governors in the former GDR are Western imports from Chancellor Kohl's party who recently lost elections or never before held governorships. Ossies say they are being governed by second- or even third-rate politicians who could not succeed in the West but are considered good enough for the them.

It was primarily Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) that lost the Berlin communal elections held in May. The CDU received only 14 percent in East Berlin. Easterners feel they have no spokesmen for their interests among the established political parties. A recent poll showed that 65 percent agree with the statement that the existing parties do a *poor* job of representing East German interests and indicated that a further 14 percent feel the parties do not represent their interests *at all*. Seemingly interminable delays have come about since the decision was made to move the capital to Berlin from prosperous and provincial Bonn, far from the daily problems of the East. Already skeptical Ossies are convinced that the move will never take place, that East Germany is to become the Sicily of Northern Europe, the permanently underdeveloped part of the country.

If these problems continue to be neglected by the parties in Bonn, Germany faces an explosive situation. The last president of the State Council of the GDR warned that massive and long-term unemployment in the East has led to a resignation that is waiting to be mobilized and could lead to violence, possibly even civil war. The neo-Nazis in the East are undoubtedly present and dangerous, but they have not yet made their strength felt at the polls. They received less than 5 percent of the May vote in East Berlin (compared with 10 percent in West Berlin). Their danger lies not in the polling booths (or at least not yet) but rather in their potential for violence, particularly against refugees from the economic collapse in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The recent riots in Rostock and other cities are an indication of the explosive situation that currently exists in the former GDR.

Ossies are beginning to resist being treated as second-class citizens. University students in the city of Halle have begun celebrating "East-culture" with "East-parties" where they play "East-songs." "To my horror," says best-selling author Günter de Bruyn, a dissident in

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the GDR, "I must confirm that for many people their GDR identity has become more stable now after it's all over than ever before." Adds Wolfgang Thierse, deputy chairman of the Social Democrats and an Ossie, "The Germans are now just beginning to realize how different they have become from each other."

Ossies are tired of what they view as an "occupation" or even an *Anschluss* by the West, and some have started to organize so-called "Committees for Justice" outside the existing political structure. Initiators of this movement include a Christian Democrat and the leader of the Party for Democratic Socialism (successor to the SED). Other founders include authors, a bishop, a former West Berlin mayor, and other leading figures from culture and politics, most (but by no means all) of whom come from the former GDR. These committees have been roundly denounced by the major parties in Bonn, who charge that the committees are a front organization for communists that will deepen the divisions between East and West rather than help overcome them. The fact is, however, that East and West have been growing further apart instead of coming together since reunification, and the formation of these committees is a somewhat belated recognition of this development, which the established parties have largely ignored. The key to improving the situation, I am convinced, lies in making leaders and opinion-makers in the West aware of the deepening division taking place in German society. The only major politician who has recognized this is the governor of Brandenberg, who called the committees "a warning card for the parties in Bonn." It is surely no coincidence that just after their formation, the *Treuhand* announced a new policy giving preference to investors from the East if their bid to buy a company is as high as a Western bid.

A respected journalist who has just written a book on this problem, Peter Bender, has come to the conclusion "that the Great Powers no longer divide Germany, the Germans are doing it themselves. We don't live in two states any more, but we do live in two societies." People in the East have not forgotten the repellant aspects of life in the GDR, though understandably the harsher contours of "earlier" life have softened as they recede into the past. Yet it would be a mistake to attribute all the discontent merely to a "GDR-nostalgia." As I heard more than one person say, "Earlier I couldn't travel to the West because it wasn't allowed. Now I can't because I don't have the time or the money. I don't see that as an improvement."

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Letter From the Baltics

by John Lukacs

Cold Comfort

◆

Ambling through the Museum of the History of the City of Helsinki I find myself in a small projection room where a film about the history of Helsinki during the last 70 years is shown. It is poignant and telling. There are shots from the late 1930's of young, smiling, large-boned Finnish women in their long white skirts, chatting at the trolley-stops or pushing their babies in prams, during the relentlessly pale Nordic summer of 1939. Then the Russian bombs start falling: the Winter War. The sound of air raid sirens; the fires crackling through dark walls and windows on December nights, their blaze more sinister in these black-and-white pictures than on color film. Then the stream of refugees from the lands the Russians have taken. Then the Second World War. More bombs. Hospital scenes. Then the slow rebuilding. All through this not one critical word about the Russians, which is remarkable as well as rare, since the history of small nations is ever so often suffused with the history of their (often legitimate) complaints.

The Finns are an admirable people (except when they are drunk, but that is a different story). They are stolid, courageous, civic-minded, patriotic rather than nationalistic. They have many reasons to hate Russians and to dwell on their injustices; yet they are not inclined to do anything of the sort. The Russians, including Stalin, knew that. In turn, what the Finns do not know about the Russians may not be worth knowing. That is why Finland, alone among the western neighbors of the Soviet Union, could remain independent even during the worst years of the Cold War. John Kennedy, who ought to have known better, asked a Finnish diplomat in 1961: "What puzzles us Americans, is why the Soviet Union has allowed Finland to retain her independence." What is puzzling is Kennedy's ignorance. Later in the 1960's and 1970's came American propaganda and fear about "Finlandization"—that is, the potential temptation of Western Europeans to insure their security and well-being by voluntarily restricting some of their independence vis-à-vis Russia, *à la* Finland. "Finlandization," of course, was an idiotic term from the beginning. The Finns knew that independence, in the life of a state or of an individual, is inseparable from self-discipline, from a knowledge of one's own limits. I often said to myself then: if only the United States itself were "Finlandized"—that is clean, reliable, homogeneous, modest, honest, well-educated, knowing its own limits of national well-being and security, uninterested in and disinclined to rhetorical, let alone political or military, ventures beyond these limits.

Some of the Soviet archives are now open. I talk with a Finnish scholar who shows me photostats of secret conferences with Stalin, with Stalin's handwriting on the margin. Here is one of them. It is 1945; Stalin won the war; Finland is potentially under his thumb. He receives a pro-Soviet delegation in the Kremlin: Finnish communists, fellow-traveling intellectuals, etc.

Hertta Kuusinen, a leading Finnish communist: "You won the war. We admire Russians." Stalin: "We did not do it alone. We have our faults. But, yes, Russians are stubborn and tough. So are you. Finland is a poor country, full of swamps and forests. But you built a state for yourselves, you fought for it. Finnish people: village people, not like Belgians. Belgians: cultured people. They gave up. Had Belgium consisted of Finns they would have fought." Later, to a Finnish general in civvies: "Why don't you wear your uniform? You have a great little army."

This is the Stalin whom the most respected American scholars of the Soviet Union still describe as a "revolutionary fanatic." Even Robert Tucker and Robert

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Conquest, who are not phonies. Conquest in his latest book describes Stalin as an extreme dogmatist; Marxism "was obviously well-tailored to Stalin's own personality." Marxism was obviously well-tailored *not* to the personality of Stalin but to the personalities of New York intellectuals, so many of them neoconservatives today.

Marshal Mannerheim knew better. He was perhaps one of the two or three most admirable leaders of imperiled nations in the 20th century (the other two were Churchill and De Gaulle). He was a Swedish baron, born in Finland, who served in the czar's army, fought in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 and 1905, and was sent after that to survey the still largely unmapped borders of the Russian Empire, a 2,000-mile journey, mostly on horseback, that took two years. In 1917 he ceased to pledge allegiance to the czar and led the Finns in defeating first their own communists and then the Red Soviet army. In 1918 a German prince was about to become king of an independent Finland. Mannerheim said no. The British will win the war, not the Germans, he foretold. Besides, we don't need a monarch who, in the 20th century, is often not much more than a figurehead. What Finland needed was a strong president. Though Mannerheim did not fill the position, he did become constable of the nation, the Marshal of Finland. In 1939, at the age of 72, he advised the Finnish government to negotiate seriously with Stalin about Finland's frontiers; he knew that Stalin wanted to regain the old frontiers of Peter the Great. He was overruled but then led the Finnish Army during the Winter War and during what became the Continuation War. When the crunch came in 1944, the Finns asked him to become their President. The Fenno-Swedish aristocrat made peace with the Georgian bandit Stalin. It was not the Socialists but the men of the Finnish Conservative Party—Mannerheim, Paasikivi, Kekkonen—whom Stalin and the Russians trusted. True conservatives, not neoconservatives, light-years away in character and intelligence from the latter bunch that is now in charge of much of our intellectual commerce.

Mannerheim never owned a house. He rented one on a flat hilltop in Helsinki, in which the Mannerheim museum is now. It has all the marks of the life of an old nobleman-soldier, including plenty of superb antlers, the skin of a tiger he shot in Nepal, two tall silver-chased horns from Tibet, his medals and guns (well, two of them are Purdeys), etc. These artifacts are not dominant or obtrusive. Impressive is his bedroom where he slept on a narrow army cot, requesting that the heat be kept at not higher than 60 degrees. Most of the house is comfortably furnished, with a North European upper-middle-class feel to it. In 1918 Mannheim divorced his difficult Russian wife and lived alone. The two Italian chandeliers he bought are not very good. The main boulevard of Helsinki is named after him and his statue is at the end of it, overlooking a soulless modern glass box of a building, not a prime place. The long living room has a view of the harbor. That view is my only luxury, Mannerheim said. That kind of restraint and modesty bonded this aristocrat to the democrats of Finland, like him defenders of Western civilization, the civilization that for the last 400 years has been a mix of aristocracy and democracy, not yet entirely leveled to the lowest common denominators of popularity, publicity, and populism.

Statues of Russian czars stand in the squares of Helsinki. There is a St. Petersburg look to the harbor quays, broad with cobblestones, well-proportioned, lined with low-lying neoclassical buildings of the Eastern European Empire style. It is a provincial capital, under gloomy grey skies in the winter, with bourgeois touches. I walk into a confiserie with stout Finnish ladies wearing large fur hats; then I sit in a brasserie where the food is not particularly good but where through the windows I see the street full of people walking around after eight on a weekday night, with the streetcar gliding by. I have the feeling that this will remain so 10, 20, 30 years from now. There is a tremendous bookshop, the Finns are great readers. "The Month in Helsinki" lists the various operas and concerts. In 1917 Finland achieved her independence. In the same year the Philadelphia Orchestra was organized. I fear that in 2017 the Philadelphia Orchestra will exist in name only: it will perform perhaps once a month at Wanamakers in a suburban mall, while in Helsinki the bookshop, the home-baked creamy cakes, the grandmotherly Saturday afternoons, and the Helsinki Philharmonic will still exist.

I fly to Tallinn, capital city of the reconstituted Republic of Estonia. At the airport the first signs of the budding, uneasy, as yet thin authority of a new sovereign state: the hastily assembled uniforms of the border guards, the girl at the visa checkpoint who cannot find the official stamp, the prevalence of signs still in Cyrillic Russian script, etc. Tallinn still has a Russian touch: one-story wooden houses, slightly askew, with their large double windows. In the lee of ugly, concrete, Soviet-style apartment houses is a yellow-painted Russian Orthodox Church, with its big bulbous pea-green onion dome; it is closed, suspicious, inscrutable. Men and women hurrying in the streets in their padded coats, Russian fur caps, and hats. Inside its buildings Tallinn has a Russian smell, with the ingredients of damp greatcoats, boiled cabbage, and cold grease.

I am lodged in Hotel Olümpia, the newest and biggest hotel in Tallinn. It was built for the Olympics in 1980, 26 stories high, all modern Soviet architecture. The usual Eastern European oddities: for some unknown reason there is an enormous empty refrigerator in my room, clanking periodically throughout the night. One must hunt for the stopper in the bathroom. As one travels east, toilet paper gets coarser and coarser. The elevators are gigantic, but they do not always work. Each may accommodate as many as thirty people, but once in a while the Russian-speaking help orders the crowded passengers aside to make way for steel carts filled with hundreds of dirty plates, exuding ever stronger smells of lukewarm, leftover grease. A hive of people at the bar; one cannot get the bartender's attention except by reaching out to grab a glass, while others are pounding and shouting. I stand in my American overcoat, my fur-lined gloves in my right pocket. A middle-aged Russian woman stalks up to me, with a crumpled face, exclaiming in English: "Come! Sit with us!" Across that dim amphitheater her group, mustachioed Caucasians, grin and wave, beckoning to me to join them. Pointing at my watch, I excuse myself. Later, out in the street, I find that the woman has stolen my gloves. The hotel is full of Georgians and Armenians, as the young Estonian woman at the desk tells me; many of them are criminals; the hotel detectives cannot dislodge them; they make passkeys, empty their belongings from their suitcases, and move into other rooms they have cased beforehand.

Are these the remnants of the Soviet

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era, of the past? Yes and no. All around me are awful premonitions of a global future. There is one kind of sound and one frenzied gunfire of pictures that throbs, rules, pervades, dominates all the public places on every floor, screaming and yelling throughout this monstrous prison-box of the Hotel Olümpia, at the bar and coffee shop and in the corridors, elevators, halls, spilling out even from the small hanging telescreens over the receptionist's desk: the black and white niggers of MTV. That deadening diabolical beat, their endless writhings and screamings—these are not the results of pain but the creations of a new kind of barbaric self-assertion. The Anglo-Saxon age is going, the prestige and power of the British are largely gone, the United States retreats across the globe, but English—well, a kind of English—is still and will remain for some time the lingua franca of the world (well, not much of a *lingua* and not very *franca*, but let that pass).

Darkness arrives in Tallinn in the early afternoon. Then the huge doors of the Hotel Olümpia are closed; the only entrance is watched by a young staff of hotel detectives, allowing some people to enter, jostling others away. Here, too, is the contrast: the new world of two kinds of people, those within and those without. Groups of young men and women, the girls with great coats over their incredible clothes, endeavor to penetrate the Olümpia. This is their instant future, the central emanations of steam-heat and loud sound and company and sex, the world of MTV, the promise not of bourgeois comforts but of a proletarian Dionysia. Outside the chilly cold, the dark city under a black starless sky, the sullen shut Orthodox church, the broken sidewalks, the older people huddled at the bus stops, going back to their hot pots in their delapidated, creaky rooms. Very far from New York and yet not so different from much of it. Eighty years ago John Butler Yeats (the poet's father) wrote that "the fiddles are tuning up all over America." It was not ragtime that he meant; but, in any event, the run from ragtime to metal-rock was shorter than he, or anyone else, could have imagined. It is near global now. New classes, New Barbarians—and the future may be theirs. It is from their ranks that one day the new Alexanders and Caesars and the new feudal lords will rise, with beautiful young women around them, longing for their chains.

Next morning, snowstorm. Sea gulls and sea hawks fly across Tallinn, inland. The Estonian historians, the scholars of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, all very nice people, as we talk about all kinds of historic details, including the smallest episodes, ransack the dramatic story of the extinction of their independence by the Russians in 1940. Some of them are troubled by their present politics. It is not easier to be free than not to be free. A new form of government and state seems to be congealing everywhere in Eastern Europe, perhaps almost everywhere in the world: the one-party state of a new kind. Not the party-state of the Nazi or Fascist or Communist type: those were police-states as well as party-states. Now the tyranny of the state police will be limited (though far from gone). Here, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the pushy squeegee tyranny of the majority will prevail, as it indeed already prevails: a nationalist govern-

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ment party that will extend its rule over the entire state apparatus, including the television news (very important now). The minority will be allowed to grumble (within bounds), it will keep a newspaper or a magazine of its own, but its chances of becoming a majority will fade month by month, year by year; it will be about as effective as the American or the British or the French or the German liberal intelligentsia, a class gradually absorbed by the soft soapy sponges of the universities, irrelevant, on its way to extinction.

I spend most of the day walking in the old baronial, Hanseatic city of which Estonians are justly proud. Only: it was all built by Germans. It is appealing and beautiful, as the old city melts gradually into the wider streets. Above and between the towers the stony passages, the strong and solid Germanic houses, still showing a sharp hierarchical sense: for the German guildmasters and burgesses here in the east of Europe were something different from *bürgerlich* and *bourgeois*. Many Lutheran churches; in some of them the impressive lodges—more than boxes—of the German or Swedish noble families, hang above the church floor, across the pulpit, crystal-paned. I can imagine the women in their tremendous dark skirts and white ruffs, sitting there bored, stiff, and haughty. There was a small and constricted and humorless but strong little civilization here in the Middle Ages and later, even at a time when the words "civilization" and "civilized" did not exist. *Please* keep in mind that these very words and their meaning arose only three or four hundred years ago. "Civilized," in English, appears in 1601: "to make civil; to bring out of a state of barbarism; to instruct in the arts of life; to enlighten and refine." A century later (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1704) appears the very word "civilization." How long will it retain its meaning? There are already hordes of young people—here and in Detroit and in New York—to whom not only the meaning but the word has become incomprehensible.

At night I take the secretary of the Academy to dinner. There is hope yet: a private restaurant, with the waiters well-dressed. But it is in a cellar, and I fear that by the 21st century all good private restaurants may be in cellars. Three courses, for both of us, payable in rubles: the total bill comes to something like one dollar and twenty cents. They pronounce ruble in English as *rubble*. So it is. The wine I must pay in Finnmarks: that costs about twenty dollars, red rotgut served in brandy glasses. No matter.

Back in the West: Helsinki on an empty, chilly Sunday. I find a Catholic Church beyond a frozen city park, a brownstone building, with a northern touch (the very large Russian Orthodox Church, on another hill, retains something of a brownstone-Nordic touch, too). The church is cold, we sit and kneel in our overcoats, not too many of us, about half are serious Vietnamese women and their children. The Mass is in Latin, which is more than cold comfort.

In the afternoon the boat to Stockholm. I was looking forward to the ship, to the pleasure of a seaborne departure, which is the very best (alas, now so rare) of departures (after which comes, on a lower scale, the petty pleasure of finding one's single compartment in a sleeping car and then leaning out the window in an old railway station of a European city; being uneasily tied down to one's cramped seat in an airplane is no departure at all). The rising throb of the boat is fine and so is the haunting, beautiful whirl of the dark icy water. Then comes the departure ritual: going for the first drink at the first bar. The pleasance is, however, compromised by the pounding of ubiquitous rock music and by the proliferation of cardboard signs on the counter: Tonight Our Special is an Elvis Cocktail; every Thursday in January is New Orleans Night; this month the program of the ship is pronounced to be a HULABALLOO. This in the middle of a Baltic winter, on a ship where there are few Americans.

The ship is enormous, laden with all kinds of technological conveniences, including television with CNN in the cabins (the global equivalent of *USA Today*, the ceaseless pictorial bilge paraded as information for illiterate functionaries). Large, coarse Scandinavian men and boys in the sauna, drinking beer. Four different restaurants in this ship, all of them acceptable, though quite expensive. Along one entire deck the inside of this tremendous ship has been gouged out for a shopping mall. The discos beat. I go to bed early and wake up early. The ship moves fast through low waves on an inky dark morning. Breakfast available only in the Scandinavian buffet manner, as almost everywhere now in the world. Droves of shuffling people, sleepy women, unshaven men, sidling uneasily with their plates, standing in line for the juice pitchers, speechless with a queasy mix of appetites and embarrassments. The waitresses come and go, whipping away the plates as soon as they can. The democratic feeding of travelers. It is all very middle-class. But that word has already lost its meaning: here, back in the West, there are virtually no proletarians and no upper classes left. Should one therefore distinguish the upper-middle from the lower-middle classes? None of that is important or significant any longer, which means not only that the Ralph Laurens are ridiculous but also that fine writers such as Evelyn Waugh will soon be read only as period pieces. Cold comfort again.

The old town of Stockholm is beautiful and inviting, too, because it is still lived in. There is a Stockholm of broad avenues, giant department stores, blaring electronics shops, office skyscrapers, glass-and-steel buildings of the 1960's and 1970's, endless traffic; but there is a sense of carefully protected interior lives, too, an instinctive rediscovery of older virtues that is more than an interior decorator's fad or nostalgia.

Such impressions are reinforced when I talk with Swedish friends in their apartment after dinner. How different is this *fin-de-siècle* from the one a century ago! We talk about Knut Hamsun, whose fame burst upon the world 100 years ago. He, even more than Ibsen and Strindberg, opened the windows of the world in the Scandinavian direction, bringing in a fresh strong wind, about the same time the fame of the great Russian writers arrived in the West. But Hamsun had more to say to the West than had the Russians. Even second-raters such as Hemingway were ruffled by the Hamsunian wind. Hamsun hated everything about the bourgeois world, its crampedness, its stuffiness, its coziness, the interiority of its lives, its intellectual philistinism, its convenient liberal categories of thinking—all of these stiflingly prevalent in the Norwegian townlets of Hamsun's time.

Next night, as I sail out of Stockholm, as the large ship wends its way among the outer islands, I see the serried lights of the social-democratic apartment houses on the low hills, here where the nightfall in winter means the slow brightening of lights in people's windows. It is unlike the sharp exterior glit-

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ter of New York, of that "numb brilliant jittery city" (as Malcolm Lowry and Julien Green wrote nearly 50 years ago; they must have meant the traffic and the hustle, but now that jitteriness is all inside). Here a somewhat chilly coziness exists but still with some measure of an interior tradition. Cold comfort.

John Lukacs is a professor of history at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Race Politics, Part Two—Clinton for President, Petty for King

◆

Welcome to Darlington. The cradle of Southern stock car racing. The sport was born near here the first time a U.S. Revenue agent figured that he could catch a moonshiner running along a twisty back road with a car load of booze. No way. . . . Darlington is tradition. First of the big tracks in the Southland, the granddaddy of them all. The land of racing heroes.

—from Stand On It, *by "Stroker Ace"*

* * *

The morning of the 43rd annual Southern 500, back in September, found me and my buddy hanging out at Darlington Raceway, posing as journalists. We talked to fans about the upcoming stockcar race and also about the upcoming presidential race (a contest that most seemed to be trying to forget). I learned, first, that the circus factions of Old Byzantium had nothing on the rivalry between the partisans of Ford and Chevrolet and, second, that George Bush was in trouble. Bush had about a two-to-one edge among those we talked to, and a third or so were undecided, but that wasn't good enough for what should have been a solidly anti-Democrat, if not pro-Republican, crowd, one that had gone literally 99 to 1 for Bush over Dukakis four years earlier. We didn't run into anyone who was actually unemployed (they couldn't have afforded the steep admission), but the subject was on people's minds. What we heard too often for Bush's comfort was encapsulated as the chorus of a country song a few weeks later: "Saddam Hussein still has a job, but I don't." Since Ross Perot was temporarily not in the running, that left Bill Clinton, but there wasn't much enthusiasm for him either. In a couple of hours Clinton would serve as the Southern 500's Grand Marshal, facing what he must have known would be a hostile crowd, and I admit I gave him a little grudging admiration for not calling in sick.

After we finished our informal poll, we went on to the garage area, where hoi polloi like Clinton were not allowed (he couldn't find an owner or driver willing to introduce him). Breezing past the crowd pressed up against the chainlink fence hoping for a glimpse of the drivers, we held out our press credentials and tried to look authentically nonchalant and arrogant. It must have worked, because the guard waved us through. Inside, powerful unmuffled engines roared, and men in bright primary colors bent over and crawled under matching-colored Fords, Chevrolets, and Pontiacs, plastered with commercial sponsors' insignia. The cars looked larger than life, and certainly they were larger than the Toyotas, Hondas, and BMWs that have pretty much taken their places on the streets where I come from. My buddy took a chaw of tobacco, and we stood watching, talking with some other onlookers about the threatening weather, yelling at each other over the blats and roars of the engines. As the mechanics began to roll the cars out to their starting positions, we spied a crowd gathering and went over to see what was up. It was a chapel service, apparently a regular feature of these races, conducted by a full-time itinerant NASCAR chaplain. We stood with the drivers and mechanics and their families as the preacher led us in song ("God is so good to me," "He saved my soul," "He's coming soon"), read a Bible passage, and delivered a little homily. (Only later, after I saw what racing looks like up close and began really to understand the danger and skill and luck it involves, did I think of bullfighters praying before a fight.)

After the service, we left the garage area, walked through a tunnel under the track, and rode an elevator to the press box beside the grandstand, where we took a couple of empty seats and helped ourselves to some of the free goodies provided for the "media." We were settling in to eat the free lunch when a NASCAR p.r. man asked to see our credentials, which turned out not to be potent enough for the pressbox. *Chronicles*' influence only goes so far, I guess. Asked politely to leave, we politely left, to find that in the meantime we'd missed the inferior cold cuts at the infield Media Center. One of the regular NASCAR reporters told us there were hotdogs at the Clinton-Gore trailer, but things were starting to happen on the stage facing the grandstand, so we scurried over to watch, pausing on the way to shake hands with Strom Thurmond, straw-hatted against the sun and working the crowd even though he wouldn't be up for reelection any time soon.

On the platform Governor Carroll Campbell of South Carolina introduced the legendary driver Richard Petty, who was driving in his last South Carolina race. The governor's every mention of Petty's name evoked cheers and applause from the otherwise thoroughly indifferent crowd. Petty stood there, lean and mean in shades and a cowboy hat, smiling beatifically as the governor proclaimed Richard Petty Day and awarded him the Order of the Palmetto.

Soon after Petty left to go get in his car there was a commotion behind us as Clinton, his handlers, go-fers, and accompanying press showed up. From thirty feet away Clinton looked much fatter than I'd thought, almost Kennedyesque. I was startled, until it occurred to me that he probably had a bulletproof vest on under his pullover sport shirt. For his sake, I hoped so: despite the Secret Service men glaring from behind their shades, 20,000 of us or so had a clear shot, and nobody'd checked *me* for weapons. During the invocation and national anthem, the crowd fell silent and removed their hats for probably the only time that day. Most of the Clinton press kept right on chatting and jockeying for camera angles, but I was pleased to see the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* reporter uncover and pay attention.

During all this, an airplane circled overhead towing a banner that read "NO DRAFT DODGER FOR PRESIDENT," and when Clinton was introduced he was roundly booed, to the obvious distress of the reporters we were standing with. I noticed, however, that

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the boos were more heartfelt than the chants of "Bush! Bush! Bush!" that a few people tried to start. Clinton, his glued-on smile unbroken, shouted the traditional "Gentlemen, start your engines" over the jeers and catcalls and beat a hasty retreat as the mighty machines rolled out behind the pace car, engines throbbing and growling. They circled the track at highway speed; then at the green flag, with an unimaginable blast of engine noise, took off.

There are better places than here to read about racing, and better informed writers to tell you about it. I'll just say that I now begin to understand the appeal of the sport. As the author of *Stand On It* puts it, "This is so different from racing Indy-type cars you can't believe it. There are folks who wet their pants every time they hear one of these big bastard NASCAR machines roar to life." The noise, the speed, the vivid colors, the pit crews' feverish work—all of this has a visceral appeal to anyone whose inner child is an East Tennessee 16-year-old. When those mighty cars are screaming past you 20 feet away at 150 miles an hour you truly appreciate the bravery of the drivers, whose skill and preparation are the only things standing between them and death. It takes a real hero—no kidding—to go out and face that every weekend and to do it with the self-deprecating insouciance so characteristic of these men. (From *Stand On It*, again, Sam Bisby's Law: "It is useless to step on the brakes when your car is upside down.")

A couple of months later, when Petty was fixing to run the Hooters 500 in Atlanta—his last race, period—CBS television, for no apparent reason, sent a crew around to ask me to comment on his status as a Southern cultural icon. The Yankee interviewer kept asking why King Richard is so admired in the South, and I tried to tell him, but he didn't seem to like what I said. Anyway, he kept rephrasing the question. I think he wanted me to say that Southerners like Petty because we lost the Civil War and he gives us something to be proud of. But I wasn't going to say *that*. I mean, one, we're not stupid enough to believe that anyone will think better of us for having good stockcar drivers; two, Southerners who are looking for something to be proud of are found in Atlanta fern-bars, not at the Darlington Raceway; and, three, I'm not sure that most race fans are aware that we lost the war. Anyway, I felt so uneasy about the interview that I didn't watch the news that night. Some of my friends say they caught me pontificating on national TV, but it's interesting that none of them can remember what I said. I hope I said that white Southern working-class folk admire Petty because he has qualities that white Southern working-class folk admire—like skill, courage, humility, and sly humor.

We watched enthralled for a time, then figured we'd better get back to work (and forage for lunch), so we nipped over to the Clinton-Gore compound to cop some hotdogs and see what the Democrats were up to. The compound consisted of a couple of trailers surrounded by chainlink fence, guarded by several burly security men in ties and gimme caps. The Clintonites, still waiting for their candidate to come shake hands, included a couple of apparent Junior Leaguers and a male sociology professor from a nearby college, and they all looked seriously out of their element. The reporters traveling with Clinton were not a down-home crowd either (unlike the sports reporters we'd been hanging out with in the Media Center). Most had beat a path straight back to the campaign's air-conditioned trailer, where someone took posterboard and markers and made a sign that said "Make Love Not Stockcar Races." Inside they pecked away on laptops and used the phone bank to file their stories about the candidate's chilly reception, which seemed to distress and puzzle most of them. My buddy and I, ever helpful, tried to explain to some that the real story was that not everybody had been booing. Sure, nobody was taking Clinton's bumper-stickers or buying the $10 T-shirts, but nobody was firebombing the trailer, either. We told them that was bad news for Bush, but they didn't seem to believe us.

My buddy and I gobbled our hotdogs (I guess we'll be paying for them for the next four years) and went off for one last look at the infield crowd, most of them now perched on top of their trailers and vans, studying the race intently. A complete 500-mile race would require 367 laps of the oval track, four hours or so, but the intricate Winston Cup scoring system awards points for a great many things besides where one finishes, and there is always the possibility of a collision to keep the fan attentive. I confess that we left early, after nearly three hours, with an eye on the gathering storm clouds and a desire to get away before the other 95,000 fans decided to do the same. We were headed back to North Carolina when we heard on the car radio that rain had stopped the race, at least temporarily. A couple of hours later we were drinking beer in a tavern in Wadesboro, talking with a bail bondsman and watching some of his clients play bumper pool, when the television johnnies interrupted their interviews with drivers and mechanics to announce that the race had been called for good.

The bumper-pool game stopped and we all turned our attention to the television for the final wrap-up. Most of the discussion centered on the fact that Davey Allison had been in contention when the race was stopped. A victory for Allison would have added the "Winston Million" (a million dollars for anyone who wins three of the four most difficult races) to the $1.3 million he had already won in 1992. But Darrell Waltrip had gambled that the rain would begin and passed up a fuel stop, so he had been leading when the red flag came out and consequently won the race. Asked how much fuel he had left at the end, Waltrip grinned and said, "About a million dollars worth."

A couple of months later, as you know, Bill Clinton was ahead when that other race was called.

John Shelton Reed isn't really a journalist, but he's willing to fake it. His day job is teaching at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill.

Letter From New York

by Murray N. Rothbard

The Year of the Italian Nonwoman

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It was late October, and my old friend was very depressed: "I'm not interested in any of these guys," he said of all the presidential candidates. "I'm only interested in one thing in this election." His voice grew warmer: "The reelection

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of 'Senator Pothole.'"

Senator Alfonse D'Amato, the only Republican victorious in a statewide election in New York in many years, is indeed affectionately known as "Senator Pothole." He is "the fixer," the last of the old-time pols, to whom ideology takes a distant back seat to fixing every little problem, including potholes, for his constituents. Not only his supporters, but *all* constituents, Democrat and Republican alike. Indeed, he is the only fixer, since his senatorial colleague, Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan, operates on such a lofty plane of cerebration that no one would think of taking pothole problems to *him*. Since Al helps everyone, no one can fault him for also fixing problems for his supporters. ("I should discriminate against someone just because he supported me?") True to form, Al appears at the functions or parades or dinners of every significant interest group. Aware of the importance of the Jewish vote, D'Amato claimed to be the best friend Israel ever had and won the implicit support of the powerful AIPAC lobby in the election.

Despite his broad support, however, everyone knew that Al D'Amato was in deep trouble in the 1992 election. In the first place, it was a Democratic year, and it was clear that Bush would lose by a landslide in New York to the triumphant upward march of Clintonian Democracy. Secondly, Al had been in severe "ethics trouble," which in modern politics means financial peccadilloes. D'Amato was a loyal product of the notorious Margiotta machine in suburban Nassau County, on Long Island. There were whispered rumors of "Mafia," and indeed D'Amato was once a character witness at a trial of the late Big Paul Castellano. But Al was in hotter water than that. A Senate ethics committee investigated him for two years, the charges centering around the alleged use of his phone and letterhead by his brother Armand, asking for favors from the executive branch. ("Whatsamatta? I can't let my own brother use my phone?") Al was vulnerable, and the best he could say was that he had been "cleared" because not actually censured by the Senate nor actually indicted in any court.

D'Amato's first piece of luck came in the Republican primary. His only announced opponent, making his first appearance on the political scene, was Laurance ("call me Larry") Rockefeller. I was out of town for Larry's first press conference, but my wife told me I had nothing to worry about. ("He's completely inarticulate, no personality, has nothing to say.") Sure enough, Larry failed to pass New York's stringent signature law for getting on the ballot.

The Democratic primary lineup was more formidable. Longtime Attorney General Bob Abrams was the anointed candidate of the party, but he was opposed by a glittering array, including former vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, trying for a comeback, City Comptroller and former Congresswoman Liz Holtzman, and clownish black militant turned "statesman" for the occasion "the Reverend" Al Sharpton. It was the predetermined "Year of the Woman," and the Democratic feminists in New York were torn between Liz Holtzman and Gerry Ferraro. They were also divided over faithful left-liberal Bob Abrams, always reliably "sound on women's issues," even sounder, in a way, than the two women in the race. Here came one of those exquisite moral dilemmas that feminists love to *kvetch* about: "Should I vote for an (Ugh!) *man* who's sound on women's issues? But how can anyone really be sound who is not herself a woman?" A complicated factor is that Ferraro was not quite as reliably leftist as her opponents: opposing national health insurance and favoring the death penalty for murderers.

It soon became clear that Ferraro was in the lead, crushing La Holtzman. The dour, mannish Holtzman never smiles, whereas Ferraro was displaying a warm, likable, let's face it even "feminine," personality. Even feminists responded better to Ferraro. Besides, Geraldine was running for personal vindication. More than 1992, 1984 was supposed to be the Year of the Woman—the first year a major party had nominated a woman for Vice-President. If Mondale/Ferraro had won, could a female in the Oval Office have been far behind? Yet, Ferraro turned out to be a profound embarrassment for the Mondale ticket. The Mondale operatives might have known a lot about politics in Minnesota; but clearly, they didn't know a darn thing about New York. If they had, they would have known that any Italo-American who owns real estate in New York (as did Ferraro's husband John Zaccaro) needs to be scrutinized very carefully, for there is a high possibility of some sort of alleged Mafia connection. Sure enough, by the end of the campaign, poor Zaccaro was in deep trouble. And now, many years out of Congress, Geraldine was making her comeback.

Things went swimmingly until the final two weeks. A week before the primary, the respected *Daily News* poll had Ferraro beating Abrams by eight percentage points, with Holtzman trailing far behind. At that point, Liz Holtzman went for the jugular. In a series of blistering attack ads, Holtzman, in her toughest prosecutorial style, revived the old Mafia-type charges: "And why did Ferraro rent a building to a professional pornographer?" Abrams, vivified, joined in the negative ads.

New York's feminists engaged in more soul-searching: "But how can one sister be so negative against another sister?" After all, weren't women supposed to bring a new, caring, nurturing, superior aura to politics? Weren't we fighting to get rid of evil men and their tough-as-nails, groin-kicking tactics? Naturally, Holtzman lashed back at her critics: after all, wasn't the point of feminism that men and women are absolutely equal in all things? Isn't it viciously "sexist," therefore, to deny women the groin-kicking tactics that men habitually use in politics? Holtzman's logic was impeccable, but in the last analysis, there was something about tough, brutal tactics used by a woman that went against the grain, something that made most people, even the staunchest egalitarian fem-

LIBERAL ARTS

RODNEY KING—STUNTED AMERICAN LEADER

"The history of the relationship between Blacks and the police has always been defined by the nightstick. The brutality continues today, says Les Payne, 'to dampen the pressure for social change by identifying potential Black leaders in early childhood and diverting them to the reform school, the prison, and the grave.'"

—from a press release for the November 1992 issue of Essence.

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inists, queasy. Holtzman's killer tactics against Ferraro worked, but only to the benefit of Abrams. In the final tally, Abrams edged out Ferraro by 1 percent, while Holtzman, incredibly, plummeted to 9 percent, 1 percent below even Al Sharpton. Holtzman's tactics turned out to be not only killer but kamikaze.

Ferraro, blind-sided and bitter, called for a recount and refused to endorse Abrams, who had gone negative following the lead of Holtzman. Ferraro's reply to the "Mafia card" was the standard victimology ploy: Holtzman and Abrams were being viciously, stereotypically, anti-Italian, demagogically playing to the prejudices of voters systematically poisoned by the anti-Italian media. Since Abrams and Holtzman are both Jewish, ethno-religious bitterness, always smoldering beneath the surface of New York politics, began to come to the fore.

The two rivals in the general election looked remarkably alike. Both Abrams and D'Amato are short, fiftyish, bespectacled, ethnic, and balding. There, however, the resemblance ends. D'Amato is brash, abrasive, emotional, with a pronounced nasal "Noo Yawk" accent. Abrams has a similar accent, but he is whiny, nerdy, terribly sincere, and terminally boring. Even his best friends and supporters admit that Abrams is boring, but they try to turn it to Abrams' favor by equating boredom with rectitude. Abrams was Mr. Rectitude, honorable, no ethical peccadilloes in *his* closet. He also had won elections by landslides, but this meant little, since it was only for the low-key post of State Attorney General.

The story was that D'Amato feared running against Abrams because of the latter's clean moral record, but the Senator brilliantly turned the new situation to his advantage. With the primary over, Abrams made his first fatal mistake: retiring for a well-earned rest and saving his TV money for later in the campaign. D'Amato and his handlers, however, rushed in immediately with a brace of brilliantly executed short ads, on TV and radio. The tactic was attack, attack, go after Abrams, and drag him off his high moral perch. Hit Abrams with moral equivalence, bring him down to D'Amato's level, and Senator Pothole's positive virtues would come shining through.

First, D'Amato played the "anti-Italian" card. This great lady, Geraldine Ferraro, had been traduced by Abrams' vicious anti-Italian demagogy. Ferraro's continued refusal to endorse Abrams reinforced this tactic, although she duly but mildly protested at D'Amato's use of her name. Finally, at the very end of the campaign, after lengthy negotiations between the Abrams and Ferraro camps, she came out for Abrams, but her endorsement was remarkably unenthusiastic and restrained. As one observer noted: "She looked like one of those clips of hostages praising Saddam Hussein."

Second, the moral equivalence theme. Bob Abrams was not Mr. Rectitude after all. D'Amato revealed that Abrams was many times late in paying school taxes on his country home and that he unwisely deducted a room in his New York City apartment from his income tax. Moreover, he denounced Abrams for conflict of interest, for accepting political contributions from lawyers and others doing business with the Attorney General's office. It was a brilliant tactic. This practice is accepted by politicians everywhere but it *looks* unethical and indeed probably is, and these charges made hay with the average voter. The moral equivalence worked beautifully: "Hey, is what Mr. Holier-Than-Thou Abrams did any better than allowing my own brother to use my phones?"

Bob Abrams never recovered from D'Amato's attacks. A humorless believer in his own morality and righteousness, Abrams was knocked off-kilter; his repeated attacks against "Senator Shakedown" were ineffective, since the public already knew about *those* old charges. Furthermore, bolstered on the personal ethics front, D'Amato was able to turn their ideological differences to his advantage. When Abrams tried to stress his support for national health insurance, D'Amato attacked brilliantly. He pointed out that this and other liberal programs mean higher taxes, contrasted these taxes with Abrams' own nonpayments, and hammered away: "Bob Abrams never met a tax he didn't like—except his own. Bob Abrams, hopelessly liberal."

By mid-October, D'Amato had miraculously pulled himself up from a 15-point deficit in the polls. But he had bogged down at 4 to 5 points behind, when Bob Abrams made the second fatal mistake of his campaign. Goaded by D'Amato's attacks and by young D'Amato hecklers at his rallies, Abrams, one late cold night at an obscure rally in Binghamton, denounced D'Amato as a "fascist." Well! The remark was picked up by only one media outlet: the *Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin*. But that was enough for D'Amato. The next day happened to be the Columbus Day parade, the annual New York City celebration of Italian-Americana. At that rally, Al D'Amato played his role to the hilt. Crying, his lip quivering in this well-televised spot, D'Amato croaked: "Fascist! . . . I'm a grandfather . . . and a father. . . ." Al couldn't go on.

What could Abrams have meant by this dread term, other than a vicious smear against Italian-Americans, accusing them of being unpatriotic traitors to their country, followers of Mussolini? The ultimate insult, what Abrams was being accused of hurling, not only against D'Amato but against all Italian-Americans. Immediately, new D'Amato TV ads hammered away at the point, showing pictures of Mussolini and denouncing this gross ethnic insult. Pressed for a retraction, Abrams compounded matters by refusing to apologize to D'Amato himself, confining his regrets to any D'Amato followers he might have offended.

That was enough. In a final surge, D'Amato caught Abrams and won the election by two percentage points, defying all the odds and the Clinton landslide.

Why indeed did Abrams use this clearly inappropriate term? It had little to do with Mussolini. There is a certain type of New York leftist over forty to whom everyone he doesn't like, everyone to the right of, say, Bob Abrams, is a "fascist." Mussolini was of course a fascist. But so was everyone else. Hitler was a "fascist." Franco was a "fascist." Joe McCarthy was a "fascist." Richard Nixon was a "fascist." Indeed, almost every Republican is a "fascist." It was that repellent mindset that burst its bonds that cold night in Binghamton and led to Abrams' fatal slip. Would that everyone who ever uses this portmanteau smear-term meet a similar fate. In this instance, at least, justice triumphed, with Senator Al D'Amato her improbable instrument.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Totalitarian Bug

by Andrei Navrozov

One day last autumn a stray clipping reminded me that the first news from abroad that startled me in England—where, six years ago, I fled from the optimism of the *New York Times* as I had fled from the comparably totalitarian bonism of *Pravda* 12 years earlier—was not some distant rumbling of Kremlin intrigue or American neoconservatism. It was an article in the *Observer* reporting on the spread of a germ that proved impervious to all antibiotics, called "methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus bacteris," or "Superstaph" for short. The novel phenomenon prompted Dr. Ken Harvey, director of microbiology at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, to predict that in the not-too-distant future "we may look back on the antibiotic era as just a passing phase in the history of medicine, an era in which a great natural resource was squandered and where the bugs proved smarter than the scientists." Permit me to change the subject ever so slightly.

Here I am six years later. Even from the relative safety of a Paris hotel room, watching a nation leap into the slightly unpleasant beyond is frightening. Well after midnight, when the final results of the referendum on "European union" have been tabulated, it transpires that the actual number of real, honest-to-goodness Gadarene lemmings is statistically negligible, though decisive enough to swing the vote. To those who find the simile oblique, I say that on this Sunday in September another fig leaf of democracy is ripped off and woven into bureaucracy's crown.

The juxtaposition is not mine. Speaking at the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton in October, Douglas Hurd says: "We want to roll back democ----." The foreign secretary misspeaks, of course, and duly corrects himself in the next sentence: "Bureaucracy." Thus the last of the fig leaves, language, is being immodestly tugged at by an Old Etonian hand. Denmark, which voted to reject the Maastricht version of "European union" in its referendum by 50.7 percent to 49.3 percent, may simply be pushed. Britain may not even get the illusion of choosing to leap.

The illusion is increasingly a luxury, as anyone who listened to the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates later last autumn will agree. Heated medieval disputations about unspecified or imaginary policies, wholly lacking in scholiastic subtlety; heroic, collegiate, provincial *braggadocio*, largely unmitigated by Protestant pieties; doctrinal narrow-mindedness, oblivious of the Catholic institution of the devil's advocate; superstitious faith in the *Optimum* of Gotttfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, unattended by a knowledge of the multiplication tables or an ability to write "Leibniz" in chalk on a blackboard; add to these a Chinese mandarin's sycophancy toward the people who matter and a Soviet official's cynicism toward The People, who don't, and one begins to realize that the illusion of choice, cultivated within our culture for the last five centuries, is now almost as dead as the corresponding reality it has at times managed to animate.

Not surprisingly, it is just such illusions that the master illusionists of the Kremlin have decided to bottle, as 75 years ago they found it useful to conserve in totalitarian aspic the aristocratic culture of old Russia. Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Chagall, Malevich—in music, poetry, and painting—for these, today, one must read Locke, Jefferson, Adam Smith, Margaret Thatcher, the United Nations, the American Enterprise Institute, the Ford Foundation, Whitehall, the *New York Times*, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. But where Russian culture, as it was slowly consumed by the totalitarian state, left a memory by the likes of which world culture may still be measured without equivocation, the artificially sustained heritage of Western political thought will at best bring those who do not already have it a temporary freedom to shop. So toothless, inchoate, ambiguous, pliable, and irrelevant have the illusions of "democracy" become that they affect the course of history, East or West, only insofar as they help those in power to stay in power.

Recent political spectacles, such as the American presidential "election" (I apologize, but the quotation marks are to remind the reader of the surrealism of such moments as when President Bush announced that during his administration "44 countries have gone democratic, or was it 43?") or the European "debate" over Maastricht (again I apologize), show that the West has consigned the illusions to oblivion. In this, too, one finds parallels with the past, because just when Russia's totalitarian rulers began conserving the aristocratic culture of Europe's century-long summer of 1815 for global propaganda purposes of their own, the West opened the floodgates to a wholesale philistinization of that culture—so that Prokofiev, for instance, who had fled what he called *Bolshevisia* in horror, returned in horror—of which the smug barbarism of the *New York Times* music critic who advised the Beethoven of the 20th century to try and write more like Beethoven is but a fleeting glimpse. And so it comes to pass that nowadays a third-rate functionary from the Institute of the U. S. A. and Canada advising "Russia's President" (here I am as unapologetic about the quotation marks as I would be if he were called "Russia's Mdcroaph" or "Most Democratically Elected Representative of All Progressive Humanity") can spout free-market arcana or quote Lincoln marginalia in

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English as fluently as his elder brother used to quote Marx or Engels in Russian, while the President of the United States is no more ashamed of acting like a Tammany boss of a century ago than his running mate is ashamed of spelling like one.

There is more to this than some Orwellian foreboding that totalitarianism is destined to become the last custodian of democracy's illusions, called politics, as it was the last custodian of the aristocratic illusions whose sum total is Western culture. There is also the dawning certainty that the underlying realities have been so twisted out of recognition, disfigured by time and warped through disuse, that never again will they rise to animate the illusions as they once did, most spectacularly during that century-long European summer.

The illusions of which I speak were, after all, human inventions—no less than compassion, chastity or chivalry, the categorical imperative or the steam locomotive—of several epochs, notably the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. As any schoolboy with a mental age above that of a Presidential candidate knows, the American Dream in particular was the philosophical issue of those epochs. The schoolboy may even realize that its seminal illusions of liberty, equality, and fraternity began as ideas sketched on the back of an old envelope, rather in the manner of Da Vinci's helicopter. One need not dwell on the original test flight of 1789. Just because some wing-flapping rascal of a flying machine does not fly should not mean that Newton's Third Law is a mirage. Modern helicopters *do* fly.

And so did the illusions of the Age of Reason, eventually lifting their corresponding realities above the millennial plateau of slavery. Even England, whose protracted isolation had enabled it to anticipate many of these practical innovations by a few hundred years—rather as North America, similarly sheltered by the Atlantic, proved itself the most suitable ground for their perpetuation—half-bowed before the genius of the *philosophes* as it had half-bowed to Luther. Much of the rest of the civilized world, however, did not have the blessing of shelter, offered by channel and ocean much the way Yugoslavia's mountains offered protection against Stalin's armor. Consequently, it was the Anglo-Saxon world, rather than Luther's native Germany or Voltaire's native France, that became the custodian of both the living practice of civic evolution (see Burke's *Reflections*) and the revolutionary genius of social reform (see Goethe's *Faust*).

Then a funny thing happened. Not only did no one say "Look, fellows, this here machine only flies in warm weather!" (or, for example, "This form of democracy is going to collapse as soon as somebody invents something better than gunpowder, not to mention a weapon of mass coercion!"), but all research was summarily discontinued. The illusions, corroborated as they were or seemed to be by the realities of the century-long summer, became the West's axiom, gospel, and code. If science had followed suit and ended in Newton, that fabulous, gentle summer would have continued forever.

But science, whose own domain had been shaped by the sociopolitical innovations of which I speak, did not shut down the laboratory and the study once Wilbur Wright's flying machine flew 852 feet in 59 seconds or once Alexander Fleming was knighted for the discovery of penicillin. The republic of science, after all, was sheltered by talent and knowledge, natural obstacles even more insuperable than oceans or mountains. No people on Earth was better suited to curate the Anglo-Saxon tradition of freedom and the Continental passion for reform than the natural philosophers who inhabit it. And curate them they did—while the rest of the world sat still, clinging to 300-year-old illusions about liberty, equality, and fraternity that in practice had long ago become irrelevant platitudes.

Unmodified, unverified, undoubted, these antediluvian relics of the Age of Reason were less and less relevant in a world where a bombing plane cost the equivalent of 800 pairs of silk stockings, a world where new means of mass communication and new weapons of mass coercion were rapidly reducing man to the level of a biological cell. Enlarging the individual, by increasing his capacity for self-defense against the encroachments of tyranny, had been the aim of civilization since the Magna Carta. The noble illusions of the French *philosophes* advanced that aim. The reversal of that progress, which John Stuart Mill found the intellectual courage to anticipate during the balmiest days of that fabulous summer, was accomplished in a few decades.

Why? Because, as Mill observed with his own eyes, no sooner were the innovations of the *philosophes* consolidated into a dogma than the West began to marginalize or persecute those who would challenge or rebel against it, forgetting that the dynamic essence of the dogma was challenge or rebellion. Thus Darwin, who challenged the biblical account of Creation, has not been challenged for a century. Thus political correctness, now for the first time shamelessly called by its own name yet no different from the age-old, ostensibly benign "accepted truth" unmasked by Mill. Thus Maastricht, unabashedly substituting bureaucracy for democracy.

Ecce the human cell. Tyranny was its contagion. Once upon a time Anglo-Saxon tradition made it resistant to lawlessness, teaching it to defend its whims against the caprices of tyrants. Then Continental paradox gave it further immunity, teaching it to rebel against tyranny, no less useful than the earlier gift. But then it stopped learning, experimenting, thinking—while the aggressive infection became ever more aggressive, selective, sophisticated. Small wonder that the cell is bound to end up as a specimen in totalitarianism's experimental ward. Nobody has taught it to withstand the new tyrannies of the bureaucracy, the media, the university, the corporation. How can it withstand nuclear blackmail or produce a leader

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LIBERAL ARTS

JUST SAY 'YES'

Chicago's Whitney Young High School was the distribution point last November for the recently formed Coalition for Positive Sexuality's "Just Say Yes" how-to sex pamphlet. Written in explicit language and accompanied by free condoms, the 18-page manual is "pro-sex, pro-gay, pro-lesbian and pro-choice," according to Anne Elizabeth Murdy, a spokeswoman for the coalition, which includes members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), Queer Nation, and the Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition, as well as high school students from the Chicago area. The pamphlet uses common slang to describe sexual practices and offers tips on where to obtain birth control devices and abortion services.

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who can spell "Leibniz"?

In 1960, 13 percent of staphylococcus infections were resistant to penicillin. In 1988, two years after the *Observer* article, the figure was 91 percent. If immunologists had stopped updating their research in 1960, it is quite likely that by 1993 medicine would be back where it was before Fleming. But the social, political, and cultural immunologists of the West did stop all such research long ago. Oh, sure, one can point to loners like Tito Perlini, one can quote from Husserl's *Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, one can object that freethinkers are still being born. The Voltaires of today, however, have no social eminences to which they can rise outside the established hierarchies of the bureaucracy, the media, the university, the corporation—the very structures, in other words, whose effect on "democracy" and the individual they are expected to examine, study, or modify. No less than the average denizen of modern society, East or West, they are simply inaudible constituents of the uniform cell structure of mankind.

The result is that Russia's "Acting Prime Minister" may now free reporters from *Krasnaia zvezda*, as he did last October, that in 1993 the military budget will again increase considerably—confident that no Western newspaper would print the news because its editors and readers alike can no longer understand how such a thing is possible or where it would fit if it were. Why, Russia's "Acting Prime Minister" can probably even recite Patrick Henry's address to the Virginia convention.

The result? Well, the one result that happens to matter more than who the President of the United States is or what Douglas Hurd thinks of "European union" is that the greatest natural resource of the West, its antibiotic heritage of democracy, has finally been squandered. As to whether the totalitarian bug that now becomes dominant is of the Moscow, the Peking, the Baghdad, or the Maastricht strain, this can only be established by a postmortem examination—a gruesome procedure for which, to add insult to injury, the West is unlikely to have either the requisite skills or the specialist knowledge.

Andrei Navrozov writes from London and is the author of The Coming Order: Reflections on Sovietology and the Media *(Claridge Press).*

Loose Rigging

by Steven Schwalm

Scandal and the 102nd Congress

Early last February, Representative John Lewis took the House floor and demanded, "How can our constituents expect Congress to address the nation's economic ills when tens of thousands may have been embezzled and stolen right here in the Capitol? How can they expect Congress to deal with a drug epidemic if cocaine is in fact being sold right here in our own workplace?" Always publicity-hungry, Congress has lately been making the papers in most unflattering ways. On the heels of the resignation of a House Speaker and Majority Whip due to financial corruption, the spectacle of sex offenses involving teenage pages, and the discovery of a brothel run out of a congressman's apartment, the 102nd Congress brought us the Keating Five controversy, the circus *cum* nomination proceedings for the most recent Supreme Court Justice, the ignominy of congressmen stiffing their own restaurant, and the House bank and post office scandals. The scope of congressional malfeasance no longer allows for the possibility that these are isolated incidents.

These recurring scandals have not only damaged people's faith in our government, but fouled the government itself. Arguing unsuccessfully against a further increase in spending for congressional staff in 1991, Senator Jesse Helms warned, "If we cannot be faithful in little things, we are not going to be faithful in big things. More importantly than that, we will further diminish any remaining faith the American people have in the ability of this institution, the U. S. Senate, the Congress of the United States, to undertake the kind of spending cuts necessary to put America's financial house in order." The disgraces of the 102nd Congress have pointed so clearly to a need for reform that even Congress itself has acknowledged it. In fact, during the recent election season congressmen themselves were among the loudest crusaders to have climbed aboard the reform bandwagon.

Unfortunately, the 102nd Congress concluded business last October without implementing most of the corrections announced in the wake of the abuses. The Keating Five scandal seems almost a faint memory. Few recall that it was just over a year ago, as the bank scandal was breaking, that Senator Cranston, the man most firmly rebuked by the Senate's investigation, stood unrepentantly in front of his colleagues, charging that "Here but for the grace of God stand you." The Senate's inability to deal with its own ethics problems during the first session of the 102nd Congress was manifested by the House during the second session. On July 31, 1991, Senator David Boren stated, "Congress is in trouble as an institution. No one doubts it. In poll after poll, Americans describe Congress as inefficient, wasteful, and compromised by the way it finances campaigns." Ironically, Senator Boren delivered these words months before the scandals in the House bank and post office rocked Capitol Hill. Since that time, public regard for Congress has hit an all-time low, with many polls showing an approval rating lower than 20 percent.

Senator Boren had been introducing a bipartisan proposal to establish a committee on congressional reform. This proposal was finally passed after a full year of delay, long enough to put off action on the law by this Congress. The same pattern of promise and delay plagues the other reforms Congress has claimed. During an August 1992 interview with Sam Donaldson on *This Week With David Brinkley*, Speaker of the House Tom Foley claimed, "We've taken care of those problems that did exist." When the Speaker closed the members-only House bank last April, he also declared the whole matter closed. As more information becomes available, however, it appears that this quick action was merely an attempt to seal the lid on a large can of worms.

Evidence indicates that, among other things, House bank accounts may have been used to cover gambling debts and to finance reelection campaigns. More significantly, it appears that House leadership knew of the abuses at the bank well before the scandal broke and attempted to sweep them under the rug. An April 3, 1991, draft report on the House bank by the General Accounting Office mentions "a continuing pattern of cashing checks when there are insufficient funds" and that "account holders

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are receiving what amounts to interest-free short-term loans." Such statements, which stand in sharp contrast to later ones by the Speaker and other House members, were stricken from the final draft of the GAO's report. In addition, the Speaker's wife may have played a part in obstructing an earlier investigation of the post office's misdeeds.

The abolition of congressional perks, trumpeted loudly last March, was quietly reconsidered in May. A few perks have been eliminated or modified, allowing members to claim broadly that action has been taken on the perk issue. But according to staff members of the House Administration Committee, "not much has happened." Even cosmetic legislation to reform the House patronage system largely responsible for the scandals has languished. Passed in time for members to face their constituents over the last Easter recess, it has still not been acted upon. Neither of the new positions created by the bill, a "House Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services" and a House Inspector General, has been filled. This pattern of promises now, personal benefits later, eerily parallels most congressional action on the budget in recent years.

The House, moreover, has shown less zeal for "cleaning house" than for grinding old political axes. While the House refused to set up a probe of its own post office scandal, it approved a plan for a $2.5 million investigation into the Reagan campaign of 1980. Unable to contend with the plank in its own eye, Congress wants to look for a sliver in someone else's. The House ethics panel investigating the check-bouncing scandal found that about 350 members have bounced checks over the past three years, with some 50 bouncing at least $100,000 each. Many members then proceeded to lie about their involvement with the bank once the scandal broke.

Clearly unable to manage events under its own roof, Congress nevertheless attempts to manage the lives of ordinary Americans. Congress has increasingly used "mandates," precise instructions to states and businesses, to accomplish its ends. In this way, it claims action on issues while avoiding the question of costs by shoving them onto others. Congress also includes minutiae in its legislation, from naming the "Joseph Ralph Sasser Boat Ramp" at river mile 752.5 in Shelby County, Tennessee, to establishing national standards for the "maximum number of cytology slides that any individual may screen in a 24-hour period" in clinical laboratories. Big Brother also has something to say about child care in over 300 bills introduced in Congress last session.

Congressional meddling in American lives is also accomplished by micromanaging executive-branch departments. This is another way Congress wields power while avoiding responsibility. Congress required 2,511 reports, at the cost of millions, from the Department of Defense in 1991, on subjects like "Beach erosion at Presque Isle, Erie, Pennsylvania" and the "Des Plains wetlands demonstration project." Yet one memo to the Defense Department from the House Committee on Government Operations addressed the deceased John Tower as Secretary of Defense. At the Department of Housing and Urban Development, abuse and corruption spanned years despite the oversight of 111 congressional committees, annual reports to Congress detailing abuses, and 2,425 phone calls a month from congressional offices. Congress did not acknowledge the scandal until a subcommittee chairman read about it in the paper. Now it has done HUD one better by increasing funds for ad-hoc grants from $10 million at the time the scandal broke back in 1989 to $260 million for fiscal year 1993. The only difference is that now it's legal: Congress is in control of the money.

As bungling and intrusive as congressional micromanagement can be, congressmen fiercely protect their executive-branch turf. John Dingell, chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, wrote to a dozen agency heads following President Bush's moratorium on regulation early last year, instructing them not to comply or review their rules, nor to consult with "anyone in the executive branch about this letter or the content of your reply."

Until it can govern itself, Congress cannot be expected to govern the nation. Senator George Mitchell admonished the Bush administration in early 1992 by saying, "Those who seek to reform others should start by reforming themselves." It is time for Congress to heed its own words.

Steven Schwalm is a congressional analyst at the Heritage Foundation.

LIBERAL ARTS

VALUE-FREE EDUCATION

From a fourth-grade spelling test celebrating Columbus Day in Chapel Hill, North Carolina:

They [the Indians] were called *SAVAGE*, and because they were all killed in a short period of time by disease and slavery, their *HISTORY* has almost been forgotten.

Many Native American peoples say that the early Europeans committed cultural *GENOCIDE* when they killed all of the people in a tribe or removed people from their homelands and forced them to live in unfamiliar regions with tribes whose ways were very different from their own.

The people of the small village of Miwetok awoke late at night to soaring flames. The whole village was destroyed in a fiery *HOLOCAUST* and the people were trembling in terror, left cold, hungry, and homeless.

The early Spanish *CONQUISTADORS CONQUERED* lands which were already occupied, and proceeded to *ANNIHILATE* and *SUBJUGATE* the native peoples, forcing them into slavery, or taking over their homelands.

Sometimes the early colonists called the Native American people *HEATHENS* because their religion was unfamiliar to them, being neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Moslem.

Often, one group will spread false rumors and *PROPAGANDA* about another, trying to sway the public to their own point of view.

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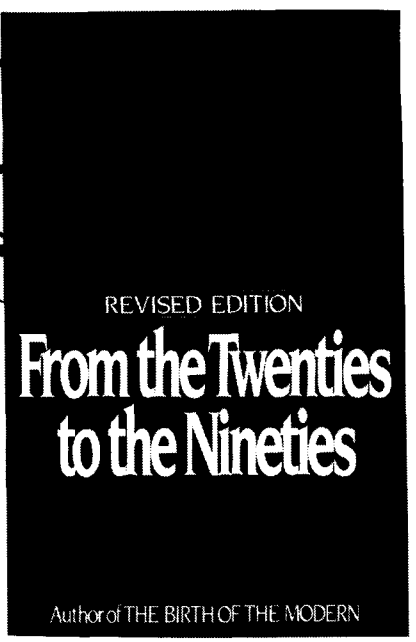

Paul Johnson rescues the 1980s from the liberals

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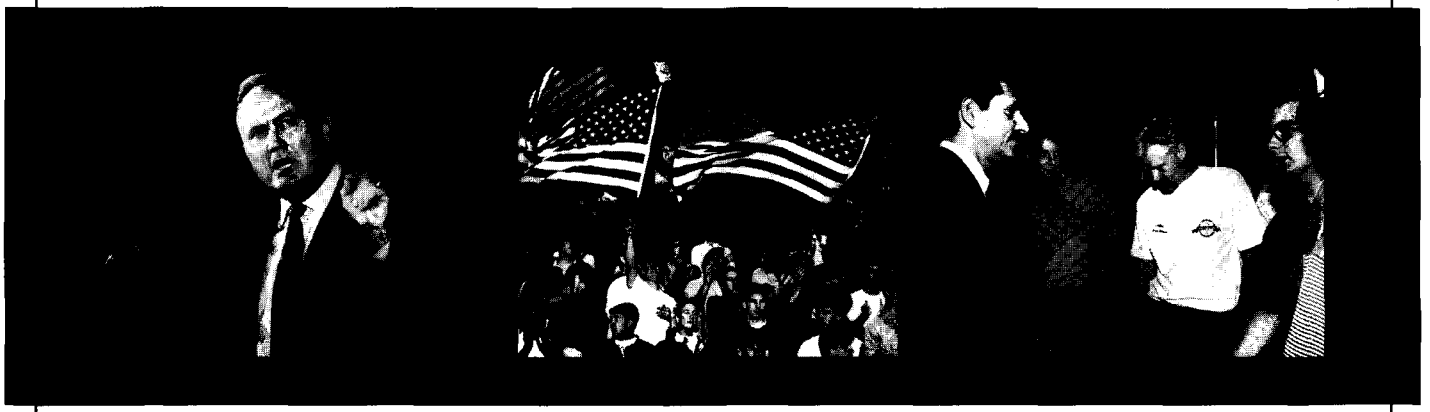

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